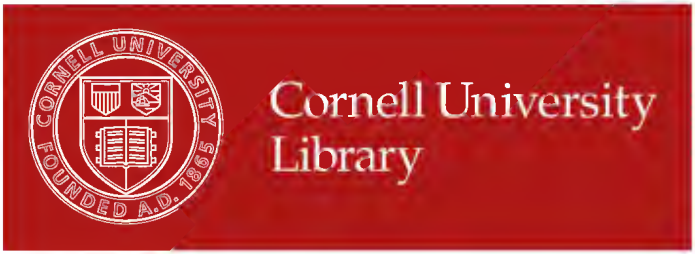

"THE HUMANISM OF THE BIBLE" SERIES.

EDITED BY

Professor JOHN E. McFADYEN, B.A. (Oxon.), D.D.
(UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW),

AND

D. RUSSELL SCOTT, M.A.
(LATE PUSEY AND ELLERTON HEBREW SCHOLAR IN THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD)

Large Crown 8vo., Cloth Gilt.
Price **6s.** net per Volume.

THE aim of the Series is to set forth the human experience that underlies, and is reflected in, the Bible. The doctrinal and theological treatment of the Bible has undoubtedly tended to obscure its transcendent human interest. This Series is an attempt to recover some of those ancient experiences and personalities which come to expression iu the Bible, and to show how fascinating and relevant they are to the life of to-day. It seeks in a broad way to interpret the spirit of the Biblical books with which it deals, and to indicate their permanent human interest and worth.

"If the series may be judged by its first volume, it promises to fulfil admirably its purpose of making the Bible a more human book."—*Glasgow Herald.*

THE BEAUTY OF THE BIBLE

A STUDY OF ITS POETS AND POETRY.

By Professor JAMES STALKER, D.D.

Just Published.

In this volume Dr. Stalker brings his well-known gifts of religious and literary insight to the interpretation of the Poetry of the Bible. After an illuminating introductory discussion of Hebrew poetry, the various poetical books are treated in sympathetic chapters, which are calculated both to open up the Bible as literature, and to exhibit its great truths alike as guidance for life and as a preparation for Christianity. The volume will carry home to its readers, with fresh conviction and power, an impression of the noble wisdom and the literary beauty of the Bible.

JESUS AND LIFE.

By Professor JOSEPH F. McFADYEN, M.A.

HISLOP COLLEGE, NAGPUR, INDIA.

"A remarkably well-written and well-informed attempt to set out the messages of our Lord for the moral and social life of to-day. . . . He writes in a very illuminating and suggestive fashion."—*The Scotsman.*

"He deals with big subjects. . . . All these subjects are discussed with an originality, a freshness of vision, and an independence that gives the book an extraordinary interest and value."—*Aberdeen Free Press.*

"It will be ranked with Glover's 'The Jesus of History' as a fine example of present-day apologetic. . . . It is admirably fitted to guide and strengthen thoughtful men in the present hour and under the present strain."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"An extremely attractive presentation of the message of Jesus for the moral and social life of our age. . . . The discussion is invariably charged to the full with sincerity and insight."—*Westminster Gazette.*

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN.

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF JOB.

By Professor JOHN EDGAR McFADYEN, D.D.

UNITED FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

"Amidst the large literature which has gathered about this masterpiece of the human soul, Dr. McFadyen's volume will have its own important place, and will deserve it."—*Glasgow Herald.*

"An exceedingly clever and original study in the Book of Job. The author throws fresh light on the tragic Old Testament story, and his new rhythmical renderings of many passages in the Book are particularly striking."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph.*

"Under his hands the Book of Job becomes more manifestly than ever one of the noblest monuments of sacred literature. Scholarship does not obscure the instinct for human interest. Vitality is the note of a very convincing book."—*Life and Work.*

STUDIES IN LIFE FROM JEWISH PROVERBS.

By W. A. L. ELMSLIE, M.A.

"A work of special interest. . . . Mr. Elmslie possesses much learning. . . . The book is full of good things, and will help any intelligent reader to understand books which, though they attract nearly everybody, often miss their aim because the reader cannot bring himself into anything like a living relation to their authors' experience."—*Times Literary Supplement.*

"Written with a rare charm of language that captivates the attention and holds it from beginning to end. . . . The treatment is human in the very best sense of the word. Altogether this is a book to be thankful for."—*Aberdeen Daily Journal.*

"What Mr. Elmslie has done represents, and that in a highly attractive form, the best help that can be given us by recent investigations."—*Westminster Gazette.*

RELIGION IN SONG.

STUDIES IN THE PSALTER.

By Professor W. G. JORDAN, D.D.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY, KINGSTON, ONTARIO, CANADA.

"Dr. Jordan is always luminous and suggestive; and we can only thank him for the effective help he has thus given to the appreciation of a portion of the Bible to which, in these days, many look so wistfully for some light on the burden and the mystery of the world."—*Westminster Gazette.*

"A useful study of the Psalter, discussing in an illuminating manner its origin, structure, and literary qualities."—*The Times.*

THE INDIVIDUALITY OF S. PAUL.

By R. H. STRACHAN, M.A.

"A close and careful investigation of the teaching of the Apostle. Mr. Strachan's style is crisp and pointed."—*The Times.*

"The book represents much honest and independent thinking, and is a very sincere and helpful contribution to a working knowledge of St. Paul's life and theology."—*The Scotsman.*

"An important and original contribution to the understanding of the New Testament."—*Sheffield Daily Telegraph.*

THE BEAUTY OF THE BIBLE

A STUDY OF ITS POETS AND POETRY

BY

JAMES STALKER, M.A., D.D.,

AUTHOR OF

"THE LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST," "IMAGO CHRISTI," ETC.

LONDON

JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET, E.C. 4

1918

TO

THE MEMORY OF

PRINCIPAL DENNEY

PREFACE

THIS book is one of a series on the Humanism of the Bible; and this point of view has been closely adhered to throughout. Therefore, the readers whom the author would most covet are those who have just reached the stage of appreciating the heritage they possess in the literature of their own country, through their ability to know what it is to receive a shock from the many-chambered mind of Shakspeare and to appreciate the organ-music of Milton's verse, to discern the iridescent witchery of De Quincey's prose and to feel the sinewy sweep of the sentences of Thackeray. These he would like to help to recognise the same qualities in the Scriptures; but of course this enjoyment is not confined to any age; those who have once learned to taste it can do so every day; it is a sweetening ingredient added to our spiritual daily bread.

Readers who may wish to plunge more deeply into the learning of the subject will do well to turn to the works of experts, which are both numerous and excellent. One of the latest of these is *The Poets of the Old Testament* by Dr. Gordon,

who was my assistant in St. Matthew's, Glasgow, and is now professor of the Old Testament in Montreal; in which will be found on nearly every point the most advanced view and a history of opinion up to date. Though far from sharing his critical views, I am proud of the minuteness and comprehensiveness of my friend's scholarship, and I recognise his love for the Word of God, though he handles the record of revelation with a freedom which I could not allow myself. To scholars the indispensable work is that of Ewald, mentioned in the Bibliography; for this man of genius so swept the Old Testament portion of the subject that all who follow appear to be but gleaners in his field.

The present may seem an unpropitious time for publishing a book like this. But from all accounts it can be gathered that poetry is not only produced but read in the trenches and on the battleships. One of my students, John Forbes, whose memoir has recently appeared under the title of *Student and Sniper-Sergeant*, carried the Book of Job in Hebrew with him to France; and, since the War commenced, the Psalms have anew been manifesting their power of yielding fresh meaning in circumstances of trial. How many a father has received the tidings of a son's death with the very words of King David, "O my son, my son, would God I had died for thee"! The Song of Deborah must thrill with a new inten-

sity in the presence of the enemy, and the Song of Moses may yet be used to celebrate victory beneath the dome of St. Paul's. It would be the greatest honour which could fall to this book, if it brought direction or comfort to any enduring the strain and stress of the present crisis.

To my colleague, Professor Selbie, I am indebted for reading the proofs, though he is not answerable for my opinions.

ABERDEEN, 1918.

CONTENTS

THE BEAUTY OF THE BIBLE

CHAPTER I

THE POETICAL BOOKS OF SCRIPTURE

I

It is a principle well understood, and acknowledged even by those who hold what may be considered an extreme doctrine of inspiration, that the Spirit of God, when moving the holy men of old to pen the sacred Scriptures, did not obliterate their natural peculiarities. Men differ from one another at least as much in their mental features as they do in bodily appearance, and these differences did not disappear from their writings, even when they were writing under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. The splendid genius of Isaiah was totally different from the melancholy spirit of Jeremiah ; the mystic flight of the mind of St. John was at the opposite pole from the vigorous movement of the intellect of St. Paul ; and, when the Spirit of God was employing these men in His service, He did not make Isaiah speak with the voice of Jeremiah or St. John with that of St. Paul. Each speaks with his own voice and displays the peculiarities of his own genius. It is

as easy to distinguish the writing of Isaiah from that of Jeremiah as to distinguish Browning from Tennyson, and it is as easy to distinguish St. John from St. Paul as it is to distinguish Carlyle from Macaulay. Inspiration made the man who was under its influence not less but more himself.

So, too, when the holy men who penned the Bible gave expression to the thoughts at which they had arrived under the guidance of inspiration, the products of their minds fell into the same literary forms as the products of the human mind have assumed in other literatures. In other literatures some writers are orators, the products of whose mental operations are speeches ; others are historians, producing histories ; some are writers of letters, the products of whose skill are epistles ; others are poets, who produce poetry ; and so on. Exactly the same variety is to be found among the various books of Scripture, some of which are histories, others epistles, some biographies, others poems, and so on.

The books of the Old Testament fall, on this principle of division, into three groups. At the beginning it contains a large number of books, extending from Genesis to Esther, which may be called Histories. At the opposite end there is a large number of books, extending from Isaiah to Malachi, which we call Prophecies. The latter is, indeed, a species of literature which is peculiar to the Bible. At least it is not met with on anything

like the same scale in other literature. The Prophecies bear a certain resemblance to what in other literature are called Orations, and in other respects they have the characteristics of poetry; but, on the whole, they must be set apart, as a literary form which was invented by the Hebrews but has not been imitated elsewhere to any considerable extent. The nearest approach to them may perhaps be found in the sermons of such preachers as Savonarola or the leaders of the Scottish pulpit in the era of the Reformation or of the Covenant. Between the historical books at the beginning of the Bible and these prophetical ones at the end there lie five books which belong to the genus of literature which we call poetical. They are Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes,* and the Song of Songs. These five are all found side by side in our Bible; but there is at least one other book clearly of the poetical genus, which has wandered away among the prophetical books. This is the Book of Lamentations, which appears in our Bible as an appendix to Jeremiah. Some would reckon to the same class the Book of Ruth, which occurs among the historical books; and there are those who would add to the group, though scarcely with the same certainty, still another from each of the larger groups—namely, Esther from the one and Jonah from the other.

* Ecclesiastes is not, however, printed as poetry in the Revised Version. It is partly prose and partly poetry.

In the New Testament there are no poetical books. The one which comes nearest to deserving the title is Revelation, which is certainly a work of the imagination and carries the reader into an imaginative world; but its Greek name—the Apocalypse—and its resemblance to Daniel suggest—what is the truth—that it belongs to the genus we have called Prophecies rather than to what we call Poetry. There are, indeed, in the Apocalypse scattered poems, and such are to be found also in other New Testament books. These are much more numerous, however, in the Old Testament, occurring in both the historical and the prophetical portions. If they were all collected and published together, they would form a volume as large as some of the poetical books.

Students of literature are very familiar with the division of poetry into different species and varieties, and it may be well, at this stage, to indicate to which of these the poems found in the Bible belong.*

The Lyric species is looked on by experts as the primitive form, from which all the others have been developed. A song is a lyric; and this is the first and most natural poetical product. In all languages which have attained to any measure of develop-

* Ewald, in the first volume of his *Dichter des alten Bundes*, introduces his account of the Hebrew poets with what is really a succinct treatise on the forms of poetry in general and their development.

ment songs exist. These may be of all kinds—short or long, merry or sad, secular or religious. To this species belongs the Book of Psalms. So does the Book of Lamentations, a collection of infinitely sad and tearful lyrics, which would be called Elegies—a variety of lyric of which a noted example is Gray's *Elegy written in a Country Churchyard.*

The second species of poetry is the Epic, and is manifestly a development of the lyric. A song may tell a story, but, when this expands to a certain length and dignity, it is styled an Epic. To the epic species belong many of the greatest poetical works in existence, such as Homer's *Iliad*, Virgil's *Æneid* and Milton's *Paradise Lost.* But of this species there is no example in the Bible, unless we reckon Ruth a poetical book. Ruth would be styled an Idyll, which is a variety of the epic species, and, if Esther were admitted among the poetical books, it would be on similar terms.

The Drama is also a development of the lyric. In a song a story may be told, not directly, but by making two or more people speak to one another in successive verses. Songs of this character in our own literature will be easily recalled by everyone. Now, if a long and complicated story is told in this way, the poem is called a drama ; and to the dramatic species many of the foremost products of human genius, such as the plays of Sophocles, Shakspeare and Schiller, belong. Two of the poetical books

of the Bible appear in this form—namely, Job and the Song of Songs.

There still remains the fourth species of poetry—the Didactic, which, as its name indicates, uses poetry as a vehicle for instruction. In some of its forms it is simpler than even the lyric, as, for example, when a rule or maxim is put into a couplet, for the sake of fixing it in the memory. But it is also capable of development into large and imposing forms. Many of Cowper's poems are of the didactic species; and in the Bible two books belong to it—namely, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Everyone remembers how much these books speak about wisdom and the instruction of the foolish; and instruction is, as has just been stated, the aim of didactic poetry.*

The primary reason for reading the Bible is that it is the Word of God, telling the sinner what he must do to be saved and pointing out to the pilgrim the pathway by which to reach the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. For this reason it would be entitled to the closest attention, though it were the driest and least attractive book in existence. In point of fact,

* These considerations may be allowed to determine the order in which the materials are arranged in the present volume. We proceed from the simpler to the more elaborate forms of poetry. But, as didactic poetry, though usually mentioned in the fourth place, is really simpler than epic or dramatic, we take the didactic books immediately after the lyric.

however, so far from being dry or unattractive, it is first-class as literature. This is something which the reader of the Bible gets into the bargain. To the mature and sanctified mind, indeed, its literary excellence may be a small matter in comparison with its spiritual value; but there may be cases in which admiration for it as literature may prove a vestibule through which to pass to an appreciation of its interior mysteries. It is honouring to its Author, while partaking of the heavenly viands which it contains, to appreciate and enjoy at the same time the lordly dish in which these are presented.

II

It may be asked why some portions of the Bible are called poetical, as distinguished from others to which we do not apply this name. And this is no easy question, because few things are more difficult than to tell exactly what poetry is. But we may say that the poetical portions of Scripture are so called on account of peculiarities in their form, their language and their thought.

(1) All are familiar with the fact that books which are poetical have a different form from books in prose. On opening a book of poetry, the reader, as a rule, sees at once that the lines are arranged in an unusual way: they do not run on with uniformity, as in prose, but are of irregular yet definite length. Perhaps they rhyme with one another—thus:

For pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed,
Or like the snow-fall in the river,
A moment white—then melts forever.

Everyone would recognise these lines to be poetry, and this is partly because they end with words which rhyme—"shed" rhyming with "spread," and "forever" with "river." But, familiar as this mark of poetry is to us, it does not belong to all poetry by any means. Indeed, rhyme is a comparatively modern poetical device. There is none of it in ancient Greek or Latin poetry; and it is totally absent from the poetry of the Bible in the original tongues, or at least very rare.*

A more universal form which poetry assumes is metre—that is, the regular recurrence of the same number of syllables or feet in the line. In English poetry this is combined with rhyme. For instance, in what we call Common Metre the first and third lines of a verse contain eight syllables each, and the second and fourth six each—thus:

That man hath perfect blessedness
  Who walketh not astray
In counsel of ungodly men,
  Nor stands in sinners' way;

and in what is called Long Metre each line has eight syllables —thus:

* Here and there coincidences of sound can be detected, but they are probably fortuitous.

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice ;
Him serve with mirth, His praise forth tell,
Come ye before Him and rejoice.

In Latin and Greek literature metre, without rhyme, is the form of poetry. But it is doubtful whether Hebrew poetry has this form either.*

What it has, in place of rhyme or metre, is what is called Parallelism. This means, that in a verse of Hebrew poetry, the thought is expressed twice, or, it may be, thrice, but generally twice, in parallel words—that is to say, with only a slight variation of language and ideas—thus :

When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained,

What is man, that Thou art mindful of him ?
And the son of man, that Thou visitest him ?

For Thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thine hands ;
Thou hast put all things under his feet.†

---

* Of late by such scholars as LEY, BICKELL, and BUDDE elaborate efforts have been made to prove that Hebrew poetry has metre as well as parallelism. Of course, in a prose translation into a foreign language, metre disappears ; but even in the English version of the Book of Lamentations it can be discerned by anyone reading attentively that there is a great difference in the length of the lines in chapters ii., iii. and iv. ; and the phenomena of this little book seem to supply the foundation on which the argument for the existence of Hebrew metre rests. See the article on Lamentations by Professor J. A. Selbie, as well as the article by Budde on Hebrew Poetry, in HASTINGS' *Dictionary of the Bible.*

† Psalm viii. 3-6.

Sometimes it is the reverse side of the thought which is expressed in the second half of the verse—thus :

A wise son maketh a glad father,
But a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.

Treasures of wickedness profit nothing,
But righteousness delivereth from death.

The Lord will not suffer the soul of the righteous to famish,
But He thrusteth away the desire of the wicked.*

It is like the swing of a pendulum : the thought, having traversed the space one way, swings back through the same space the opposite way. It is like the advance and the backward sweep of the wave, or the inspiration and the expiration of the breath in the lungs.

To some it may seem a strange notion of poetry thus, when a thing has been said, to say it over again in similar words. But probably to an ancient Hebrew our love of the clink of rhyme at the end of our lines would have seemed a still more surprising conception of poetry. The underlying principle of the two is, however, the same. When we hear a line of a certain length, we like to hear another coming after it of the same length and ending with the same sound ; and, when the Hebrew heard a poetical thought expressed, he liked to hear it expressed again in nearly the same words. Our poetic form is a parallelism of sound, his was a parallelism of sense. At any rate the intelligent

* Prov. x. 1-3.

reader will find it of enormous advantage, in reading the poetical portions of the Bible, to attend to the parallelism. Sometimes this even determines the sense of a passage; because, when there are two rival translations of a line, one of which affords a parallelism with the other line in the verse, while the other does not, the probability is high that the former is the correct reading and rendering.

The reality of the line as the basis of Hebrew poetry is guaranteed by Psalm cxxxvi., where every line is followed by the words, "For His mercy endureth forever"; and the guarantee of the reality of the double line or verse is found in the existence of a number of what are called Acrostic Psalms, in which the number of verses is the same as that of the Hebrew alphabet, and the successive verses begin with the successive letters.* It is a singular fact, however, that the parallelism in the structure of Hebrew poetry had been forgotten for centuries and had perished from the minds of men, until it was rediscovered by Bishop Lowth and published to the world in 1753. This fact encourages the hope that the future may contain discoveries which will be equally illuminating; and at the present time, in quarters not a few, the acutest researches are being made into the poetical form of Hebrew

* Psalms xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., cxi., cxii., cxix. (an eightfold acrostic), cxlv.

poetry.* But the long neglect of parallelism raises the question whether the copyists, being unaware of it, admitted alterations which now require correction through the nearest approach that can be made to the original parallelism. Certainly in the poetical books, as they now stand, this is far from being perfect; and the question is, whether it was ever perfect, or whether there was always room for the introduction of a good deal not absolutely corresponding to the type.

While the parallelism is an important guide to the sense of the single verse, there are other indications of the sense of more verses than one. Among these is the refrain, or chorus, occurring fairly often. In Psalms xlii. and xliii., for example, the threefold recurrence of the words,

> Why art thou cast down, O my soul ?
> And why art thou disquieted within me ?
> Hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise Him,
> Who is the health of my countenance, and my God,

may indicate that these Psalms were originally one, and at all events they lead the reader to expect a certain unity of thought in the portion preceding each occurrence of the chorus. In Psalm cvii. there is a double chorus, which is a remarkable guide to the sense. In the opening verses it is announced that the Psalm is a Song of Redemption ;

* *Cf.* Briggs : *General Introduction to the Study of Holy Scripture*, pp. 361 ff. and Koenig : *Stilistik, Rhetorik, Poetik in Bezug auf die biblische Literatur.*

and in the rest of the Psalm the troubles are enumerated from which different classes have been redeemed. In each case the trouble is briefly described, then comes this chorus :

> Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
> And He delivered them out of their distresses.

An account follows of the circumstances of the deliverance; and then, in each case, occurs the other chorus :

> Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness,
> And for His wonderful works to the children of men.

The section closes with a recapitulation of the deliverance in a single verse. With great picturesqueness are thus described the redemptions experienced by travellers (4-9); by prisoners (10-16); by penitents (17-22); by mariners (23-32). From this point onwards the experiences of emigrants appear to be described; but the choruses have disappeared, and the Psalm winds up in a certain amount of obscurity, if not confusion; but whether this is due to a breakdown in the poetic energy of the author or to the failure of a transcriber to observe the structure of the poem cannot now be affirmed with certainty.

It is often easy to see that several verses have a close connection among themselves, even when there is no chorus to indicate the fact; and the ability to identify these paragraphs or strophes, as

they are called, is one of the chief gifts of the interpreter. In Psalm ii., for example, which contains twelve verses, the parallelism in the several verses is easily perceived; but, when the whole piece is divided into four strophes of three verses each, there emerges a dramatic unity so striking that it is worth while to work it out in detail;* and this is given as a specimen of what can be done in the way of interpretation through close attention to the metrical form.

(2) Another distinctive feature of the poetical books of Scripture is their language. The language of poetry is more choice and exquisite than that of prose. Hence in poetry words and phrases may be quite appropriate which would sound affected and exaggerated in ordinary speech. As on occasions of festivity and ceremony we naturally wear clothing which would be out of place in everyday work, so poetry demands a splendour and gorgeousness of language which prose hardly tolerates. Especially is figurative language the native wear of poetry. Wordsworth speaks of the swan that on St. Mary's Loch "floats double, swan and shadow";† and all are aware of the charm which is added to the graceful form and dignified motion of that bird by its reflection in the sunny water on which

* See Appendix A, p. 226. Appendix B, though introduced for different reasons, illustrates the same thing.

† *Cf.* GILFILLAN: *The Bards of the Bible*, p. 33, sixth edition, London, 1874.

it sits. This is like the charm of figurative language, which lets us see both a truth and, at the same time, its reflection in a material image. For example, when Psalm xxiii. says, "The Lord is my shepherd," and goes on to give an elaborate and exquisite picture of the life of the sheep under the care of a good shepherd, the care of God, thus reflected in an image of human kindness, affects us far more than if it were described by itself. The delight we enjoy in this double expression of the truth is like that felt by the ear when, in some sylvan scene, it hears music softly answered by an echo in the distance.

Nowhere can the true poet be at a loss for imagery in which to mirror the truths which it is his mission to express; but in Palestine the sacred poets were at a very great advantage; because theirs was an incomparably beautiful country, in which the poetic temperament derived nourishment from everything entering the senses. The contrasts of raging sea and placid lake, fruitful plain and sandy wilderness; the picturesque labours of the inhabitants—of the shepherd tending his flock, the fisherman spreading his net, the vinedresser tilling the soil—the vicissitudes of peace and war; the festive pilgrimages of the religious year, when the whole land was in motion with singing companies thronging the roads on their way to the capital and the temple; the procession over its surface of the seasons and the profusion of its products—all these fed the poetic

imagination and tempted it to the utmost exertion of its power. Hence, in the poetical portions of Scripture the aspects of the Holy Land stand revealed in lifelike forms of beauty and sublimity, but only as the reflection and echo of truths still more beautiful and sublime.

(3) The third thing which makes certain portions of Scripture poetical is their thought. And this is the most decisive distinction of all. Although poetry naturally flows into certain forms and expresses itself in language of a certain kind, that which makes it poetry is the quality of its thought. Poetry may be defined as exquisite thought in exquisite words. As the moisture of the atmosphere at a certain height becomes snow, so thought at a certain elevation becomes poetry; only it is not cold which makes the transformation in this case, but heat. It is when thought is issuing from the mind with a certain impetuosity and warmth that it comes out in poetic form. It is when an original idea has ignited the mind with a flash of fire, or a fresh and overmastering feeling has set the heart in a glow that poetry is likely to appear as the result.

There may be those to whom it sounds disparaging to speak of some books of the Bible as poetical and of their writers as poets, because poems seem to them a light kind of literature and poets a light kind of people. No doubt there has been plenty of light poetry, and there have been many frivolous

poets. Yet the greatest books of the world are poetical. Homer is the chief representative of Greek literature, and the poems of Horace are more read than any other Latin book. Dante's *Divine Comedy* has done more to give to Italy its literary position in the world than all the rest of Italian books put together, and Goethe's *Faust* is the palmary product of German literature. If English literature were on the point of perishing, what the world would like to rescue from the flames would be the works of Shakspeare and the poems of Burns. A nation's poetry is the sublimated essence of its thinking, and the poetic form has a preservative virtue, which confers immortality on that which it enshrines. The reason why the Bible is so pervaded with poetry is because the thought which it contains is so living and original, and because this so mastered and melted the minds to which it was first communicated that their utterance partook of the movement and music from which it originated. Coleridge's well-known remark, that, wherever the words become peculiarly beautiful or sublime, the thought which they express will be found to be deep and original, applies to the Bible in the fullest measure; and the Bible reader may rely upon it that, when the poetry intensifies, there are, underneath, the great deeps of truth and faith.*

* Robert Louis Stevenson, in a communication to a volume entitled *Books which Have Influenced Me*, once wrote—and the words

III

Up to this point the theme of this chapter has been the poetry of the Bible in those respects in which it resembles other poetry ; but it will be well, before closing, to point out the grand distinction by which the poetry of the Bible is separated from that of other peoples.

At present it is becoming common to speak of the Bible as a library instead of a book, as it can be printed in many volumes, exhibiting great differences in size, age and contents ; and hence the impression might easily be taken up that the Bible is simply the literature of the Hebrew people in the same sense as the body of the Greek classics forms the literature of the Greek people or our own classics might be spoken of as the literature of the English people. Now, it is true that the books of the Bible form a literature, that they were the products of the history of the Hebrew people from age to age, and that their various forms are due to the variety of genius in the writers by whom they were penned. This is far truer than used to be generally recog-

might almost be borrowed for a motto to the present volume: " The next book, in the order of time, to influence me was the New Testament, and in particular the Gospel according to St. Matthew. I believe it would startle and move anyone, if they could make a certain effort of imagination and read it freshly like a book, not droningly and dully like a portion of the Bible." So it would ; and this is the one thing kept in view in this volume.

nised; and the recognition of it is one of the gains of the stage of enlightenment at which we are now standing. Yet this by itself will not account for the Bible. It will not account for what is in it, and still less will it account for what is left out of it. There were plenty of other books produced by the genius of the Hebrews besides those included in the Bible. In the region of poetry especially, with which we are at present dealing, we know from evidence in the Bible itself, there were plenty of pieces devoted to wit, love, bacchanalian sentiment and similar themes, produced by the Hebrews; and, if the Bible were merely the literature of the Hebrews, it would include these. But they have all been excluded.

The peculiarity of the Bible is that, in spite of the variety of its contents, their widely different ages and their different authors, it is all about God and man in his relation to God. In Greek literature, one poet, Homer, is religious, another, Aristophanes, is grossly irreligious; one historian, Herodotus, takes a religious view of history, another, Thucydides, takes a purely earthly view of the events which he records. So, in our own literature, Milton is a religious poet, whereas Byron is the reverse; one philosopher, Lord Bacon, sees God in the structure of the universe and the workings of the human mind, while another, John Stuart Mill, leaves this element out of his speculation. But all the books

of the Bible are full of God. History, prophecy, poetry are in this respect set on one key, like the various groups in a large orchestra. However these books may have been collected, the principle by which they are bound together is not merely or chiefly their common connection with the Hebrew people or the Hebrew history, but the fact that they belong to Him whose Spirit breathes through them all, the connection with Him imparting to them their unity.

Not only, however, do these books with one consent and harmony speak of God, but those of them belonging to the Old Testament—and these form the great majority—exhibit, further, a common movement: they are all pointing and straining forward to the revelation of the Son of God in the flesh. Some do so more distinctly, others more obscurely; but the movement is common to them all. They all convey a subtle sense of their own imperfection, and make the reader lift up his eyes for the complementary truth which is to complete them; and this, when it is discovered, is nothing less than the Truth Incarnate. Thus will the mind, apprehended and guided by them, be landed eventually at the manger of Bethlehem and the cross of Calvary.

CHAPTER II

POEMS EMBEDDED IN THE NON-POETICAL BOOKS

In the preceding chapter it was mentioned that, besides the books which are wholly poetical, there are poems scattered through the other books of Scripture. In the Revised Version these are easily identified through their being printed in an unusual form; and they number over thirty in the Old Testament, besides a few in the New. Some of them are very short, not exceeding a few lines; but others are of considerable length, and in poetical quality they certainly do not fall below the standard of the poetical books. Indeed, some of them were, through their originality and sublimity, among the first to draw the attention of scholars to the aspect of Scripture to which the present volume is dedicated.*

I

The earliest of all the poems in the Bible is the song of Lamech, Genesis iv. 23, 24:

* Herder, in whom the spirit of Romanticism was strong, moved with special predilection among the fragments of early lyric poetry; and his *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry* first broke ground in a decisive way in the direction indicated.

Adah and Zillah, hear my voice;
Ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech;
For I have slain a man for wounding me,
And a young man for bruising me:
If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold,
Truly Lamech seventy-and-seven fold.

Lamech was one of the gifted but wild and reckless descendants of Cain, and this poem celebrates an incident in his violent life. The opening address to his wives has been supposed to stamp him as the founder of polygamy. Under the boasting about his prowess there may be concealed a reference to a weapon furnished to him by his son Tubalcain, the first forger of iron. Cain had, through the intervention of God, been protected from the consequences of his deed of blood; but Lamech had found, in his own good sword, a means of self-defence, which appeared to him to be infinitely more trustworthy than the divine protection. His words are the glorying of an armed man in his weapon—undoubtedly one of the commonest and most heartfelt sentiments of antiquity.

Although, as in the case of Lamech, the feeling associated with bloodshed in the early world was often of a barbarous and godless description, this was not always the case. War might be waged in a good cause, and the patriotic sentiments, aroused in connection with it, might embody themselves in song. Of this we have a remarkable instance in the song of Deborah, in Judges v.

Deborah was a woman of prophetic gifts, who, in union with Barak, another patriotic spirit of the time, whom she stirred into activity by her exhortations, delivered her country from the yoke of an oppressor. She was a kind of Joan of Arc of the early world. She possessed, besides, the gift of song, and, when the daring adventure by which her country was liberated was over, she celebrated the incidents of it in a poem which still thrills with the glow of her enthusiasm. It is chiefly occupied with praise for those tribes and cities of her country that came out and risked everything to aid the enterprise, while it pours scorn on the shirkers and cowards who drew back and saved their skins in the evil day. In the very first verse the keynote is splendidly struck :

> For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,
> For that the people offered themselves willingly,
> Bless ye the Lord.*

How perfectly these lines hit the mark! What better could be wished for any country, or for the Church of God, or for any good enterprise, than that the leaders should take the lead and that the rank and file should offer themselves willingly? Alas, too often the leaders do not lead : those who ought from their influence or knowledge to take

* This translation is one of the gems of the Revised Version. The old translation, in the Authorised Version, was : " Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves."

this position hang back, either from indifference or from fear of responsibility. Sometimes, too, the people do not follow, even when the leaders are in their places: they wish to be themselves leaders, or they are too occupied with their private affairs, or they are too timid to be of use in a public cause. This keynote of Deborah's song is the keynote for the good cause in every age. But many have been the leaders, in patriotic ventures or social experiments, who have had to hiss out against the coldblooded or fainthearted the words of v. 23:

> Curse ye Meroz, said the angel of the Lord,
> Curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof;
> Because they came not to the help of the Lord,
> To the help of the Lord against the mighty.

The song ends with a picture the poetical beauty of which cannot be surpassed. One incident of the war was the death of Sisera, the captain of the heathen host; and Deborah pictures his mother at home, watching and longing for the return of her son, whom she was never to see more:

> Through the window she looked forth, and cried,
> The mother of Sisera cried through the lattice,
> Why is his chariot so long in coming?
> Why tarry the wheels of his chariot?
> Her wise ladies answered her,
> Yea, she returned answer to herself,
> Have they not found, have they not divided the spoil?
> A damsel, two damsels to every man;
> To Sisera a spoil of divers colours,
> A spoil of divers colours of embroidery,
> Of divers colours of embroidery on both sides, on the necks of the spoil.

Thus did she try to still the forebodings of her heart, while her son was lying far away with the nail of Jael through his temples.

There is another song of war, which celebrates a far greater deliverance—that sung by the Hebrews on the shore of the Red Sea, when the waters had swallowed up Pharaoh and his host. It is found in Exodus xv., and it describes the scene with many graphic touches. There is in it the sense of greatness belonging to an event in which a nation had its birth; and the sentiment culminates in ascribing all the victory to the quarter to which it belongs:

> Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?
> Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness,
> Fearful in praises, doing wonders?

It is a poem pulsing with the joy of deliverance; and even yet it is fit to serve as a vehicle of thanksgiving for any great deliverance—even for salvation itself.

The author was Moses; and this was the first revelation of his poetic gift.* Moses was one of

* It hardly needs to be mentioned that by the more radical school of criticism this poem and, indeed, nearly every other mentioned in this chapter would be denied to the authors to whom they are attributed in Scripture, being given to authors unknown and assigned to the different epochs of a dogmatically constructed history. The reason for doubt in the present case is that Moses betrays too much acquaintance with subsequent events. But one in his position may be credited with having already ascertained something beforehand about the route of his expedition, and even a "sanctuary" as a religious centre may have presented itself before his prophetic soul.

the greatest of the sons of men. Few are the names in history that figure in such a variety of rôles ; and in all he displayed a unique greatness. Perhaps, however, the rôle in which we should least have expected him to play a part is that of poet. It might have been thought that, with the care of so many thousands of slaves on his shoulders and with the perils of the wilderness in front of him, the poetry would have been all crushed out of his soul. Yet this was by no means the case ; for, besides this imperishable ode, we have, in the non-poetical books, two other poems of his hardly less remarkable. These are to be found in Deuteronomy xxxii. and xxxiii. The first of them is a contrast between the love and faithfulness of God to Israel and the unfaithfulness of Israel to Him. It is full of vigour throughout ; but it is especially remarkable for the tenderness with which the love of God for His people is delineated, as in vv. 9-11 :

For the Lord's portion is His people ;
Jacob is the lot of His inheritance ;
He found him in a desert land,
And in the waste howling wilderness ;
He compassed him about, He cared for him,
He kept him as the apple of His eye :
As an eagle that stirreth up her nest,
That fluttereth over her young,
He spread abroad His wings, He took them,
He bare them on His pinions :
The Lord alone did lead him,
And there was no strange god with him.

The other poem belongs to a species of which there are several examples : it is a dying man's blessing. To the last words of the dying peculiar importance and sacredness have been attached in all ages. As Shakspeare says, " the words of dying men enforce attention like deep harmony." In ancient times a kind of prophetic dignity was supposed to attach to such utterances, and in the Bible some of the foremost of God's saints are so filled, near their end, with the Spirit of the Lord that the veil of the future is rent to their eyes, and they describe in the lofty language of poetry the things that are to be.

This utterance of Moses belongs to this class. An example even more remarkable is the swan-song of Jacob, to be found in Genesis xlix. The dying patriarch, with his sons about him, begins :

> Assemble yourselves, and hear, ye sons of Jacob ;
> And hearken unto Israel, your father.

Then he is borne away on the wings of inspiration, and, as if from a station in mid-heaven, he looks down upon the fortunes of his children and their descendants in the future. It is an instance of how the secrets of literary science may be coiled up in a single fragment from antiquity that the complete unravelling of the allusions in this song would demand minute acquaintance with the entire history of Israel, while the promise contained in v. 10 :

The sceptre shall not depart from Judah,
Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet,
Until Shiloh come;
And unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be

could not be finally judged without a comprehension of the entire subject of Messianic prophecy. Accessible to all readers, however, is the richness of the imagery, nearly every verse being a picture of Oriental scenery or life, full of poetic beauty. As an example v. 22 may be cited:

Joseph is a fruitful bough,
A fruitful bough by a fountain;
His branches run over the wall:

where the reader almost hears the tinkle of the plashing fountain and sees the ruddy-cheeked fruit, hanging in profusion over the wall of the orchard.

Another Old Testament worthy whose last words have come down to us in the poetical form is King David. These are to be found in 2 Samuel xxiii., and their poetical and regal qualities well become the situation:

David, the son of Jesse, saith,
And the man who was raised on high saith,
The anointed of the God of Jacob,
And the sweet psalmist of Israel;
The spirit of the Lord spake by me,
And His word was upon my tongue.
The God of Israel said,
The Rock of Israel spake to me:
One that ruleth over men righteously,
That ruleth in the fear of God,

He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth
A morning without clouds ;
When the tender grass springeth out of the earth,
Through clear shining after rain.

In the immediately preceding chapter there is a song of this hero, composed " in the day that God had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies " ; but it is only a duplicate of Psalm xviii. There occur in the historical books other compositions of David which are also duplicated in the Book of Psalms ; but there is one for the preservation of which we are indebted to one of these books alone, as it is found in 2 Samuel i. This is the incomparable lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan :

How are the mighty fallen !
Tell it not in Gath,
Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon ;
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice,
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
Ye mountains of Gilboa,
Let there be no dew nor rain upon you,
Neither fields of offerings :
For there the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away,
The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil.
From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty,
The bow of Jonathan turned not back,
And the sword of Saul returned not empty.
Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives,
And in their death they were not divided ;
They were swifter than eagles,
They were stronger than lions.
Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
Who clothed you in scarlet delicately,
Who put ornaments of gold upon your apparel.
How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle !

Jonathan is slain upon thy high places.
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan :
Very pleasant hast thou been unto me :
Thy love to me was wonderful,
Passing the love of women.
How are the mighty fallen,
And the weapons of war perished !

This splendid composition seems to have borne the title of the Song of the Bow, in obvious allusion to the skill of Jonathan as an archer ; and the words by which it is introduced ought not to be read, as in the Authorised Version, " Also he bade them teach the children of Judah the use of the bow," but, " And he bade them teach the children of Judah the song of the bow."

One of the most enigmatical figures in the whole Bible is Balaam, who was brought from his place in the far East, by Balak, king of Moab, for the purpose of cursing the Israelites, as they were passing through the borders of Moab. Balaam is associated in the minds of most people with the story of his ass speaking ; but there are other things about him no less worthy of attention. He was obviously a man of supreme genius ; and of this we possess remarkable relics in the poetical form. He was quite willing to curse, having the prospect of being well paid for it ; but, as often as he was brought in sight of the people of God, a sense of the contrast between their character and that of the peoples whose territories they were invading swept through

his soul; and out of this contrast there rose before his mind's eye a vision of the dazzling success awaiting them in the future. The afflatus completely carried him away; and he poured forth his feelings and ideas in the four poems which have been preserved in Numbers xxiii., xxiv. These are full of memorable sayings, of which perhaps the most remarkable is:

> Let me die the death of the righteous,
> And let my last end be like his!

It is an easy transition from Balaam, who was a prophet half-true and half-false, to the prophetical books. In these the Revised Version prints very few passages as if they were poetry. Perhaps there are only three. Two of these are prayers—the prayer of Hezekiah, begging for recovery from his mortal illness, Isaiah xxxix., and the prayer of Jonah, which occupies the second chapter of his prophecy. It has already been mentioned that in one place the Psalms of David are called the "prayers" of David; and it might have been noticed when the historical books were under consideration, that the prayer of Hannah, in 1 Samuel ii., is also in the poetical form. All three prayers are poetical in their substance as well as in their form; but this is far truer of the third piece printed as poetry in the prophetical books; for this is one of the most glowing poems contained in the Bible. It is found in Habakkuk; and the first verse says that it is

" set to Shigionoth," which is probably a musical term, denoting that it was made for singing. Likewise at the close the direction occurs, " For the chief musician on my stringed instruments." The theme is a theophany—that is, an ideal representation of the intervention of God in history. In the earlier verses it is somewhat obscure; but, at the close, it swells out into the well-known expression of faith, as musical in its wording as it is exalted in idea:

> For though the figtree shall not blossom,
> Neither shall fruit be in the vines;
> The labour of the olive shall fail,
> And the fields shall yield no meat;
> The flocks shall be cut off from the fold,
> And there shall be no herd in the stalls:
> Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,
> I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Although, however, the Revised Version only prints these three pieces in the Prophetical books as poetry, there are many others which merit the honour. In truth, throughout the prophetical books as a whole both the thought and the language may be said to be always on the very verge of passing into poetry; and not infrequently this point is passed. This is especially true of Isaiah. In his fifth chapter he himself calls his comparison of Israel with a vineyard a song; and he gives a similar name to the wonderful description in chapter xiv. of the fall of the king of Babylon, in which he pictures the entry of that great monarch into Hades, when all

the dead kings of the nations rise up from their shadowy thrones, to ask in astonished exultation: "Art thou also become weak as we? art thou become like unto us? Thy pomp is brought down to hell, and the noise of thy viols: the worm is spread under thee, and worms cover thee. How art thou fallen from heaven, O day star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst lay low the nations!"

But, indeed, in Isaiah everywhere there is the breath of poetry; and especially when he launches forth on one of his favourite themes—when, for example, he is describing the greatness and magnificence of Jehovah, or when the glory of the latter days rises on his vision, or when he catches a glimpse of the coming Messiah—his thought spontaneously assumes the intensity, and his expression arrays itself in the imagery, and his language follows the measured regularity characteristic of poetry.

II

In the New Testament, also, there are poems embedded, of which the most obvious proceeded from the prophetic voices by which the birth of the Saviour was greeted, according to the testimony of St. Luke. These are all like one another, and they supply an uncommonly realistic impression of the circle of the *Prosdechomenoi*—that is, the waiters or expecters—out of which both the Baptist

and Jesus came forth. In a period when public religion was in the last stages of decay these were the inheritors of a better age; they understood the Scriptures of the Old Testament in their true spirit; and, though they sighed over the evils of the present, they were confident that Jehovah would yet visit His people and fulfil all the promises. It was to them that Jesus was primarily addressing Himself when He uttered the Beatitudes to "the poor in spirit"; and it was for them also that the great message of His ministry was primarily intended, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Their hymns, whether proceeding from the Virgin Mary or Zacharias, the father of the Baptist, or from the aged Simeon or the prophetess Anna, are all of a piece, and they perfectly reflect the views of those who were "looking for the redemption of Jerusalem." The words of the angel who announced the birth of the holy Child are derived from the same quarter; but they carry us forward by a natural transition to the numerous voices from heaven which sound in the Book of Revelation. It is unfortunate that, in the Revised Version, these snatches of heavenly music are not distinguished by any alteration in the printing from the surrounding prose; but this oversight has been remedied in the American Revision, though even it fails thus to draw attention to the poetical nature of the great dirge on the fall

of Babylon contained in chapter xviii. This has, indeed, turned out, on close investigation, to be little more than a *cento* of lines borrowed from similar dirges on the fall of empires or cities in the Old Testament prophets; yet with so much freedom are both ideas and language employed as to produce all the effect of an original contribution; and its poetical character would have been well worthy of emphasis.*

There are multitudes of quotations from the Old Testament in the New, abounding especially in Matthew, Romans and Hebrews; and, when these are from poetical books, they are quoted as poetry. Indeed, to its credit the Revised Version commits many inconsistencies by printing as poetry passages from the prophets which are not so printed in the Old Testament itself.

From poetry outside the Bible St. Paul made a celebrated quotation in his speech on Mars Hill; but this is not dignified with special print in our Revised Version, though it is in the American. The same remarks apply to the quotation from a heathen poet in Titus i. 12. In 1 Timothy iii. 16 occur words which have the appearance of being extracted from a primitive Christian hymn; and again the American Revision takes note of this, in the mode of printing, though our Revised Version

* This is printed as a poem in WEYMOUTH'S *New Testament in Modern Speech.*

does not. Here and there in St. Paul's writings there occur prayers which have made on scholars the impression that they may have been extracted from primitive liturgies; but it is quite possible that one who, in his evangelistic tours, had to pray so often for the same things in similar circumstances may have allowed certain of his own favourite petitions or doxologies to assume stereotyped forms, which slipped, as he wrote, almost unawares into his composition. A similar origin may perhaps be assumed, likewise, for some of the passages in his Epistles the literary form of which is most perfect. These may have been delivered so often to different audiences that they came away from his lips in almost identical terms, and these approach most closely to the poetic form. The thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians may have been delivered hundreds of times as part of a discourse; and it would be easy to print it in a shape differing very little from poetry.*

The most interesting question of all is, how far the words of Jesus may be looked upon as poetical. The late Professor Briggs, in a series of articles in *The Expository Times*, in 1897 and 1898,† made the

* "The title Hymn is naturally applied by every sympathetic reader to this chapter; *das hohe Lied von der Liebe* is the name that Dr. Harnack uses. The chapter is not written in plain prose: it has the measured stately movement and rhythm of a hymn." Sir William Ramsay: *The Teaching of Paul*, p. 330. 1913.

† Vol. viii., pp. 393 ff., 452 ff., 492 ff.; vol. ix., 6-9.

proposal to print a great many portions of what he termed the Wisdom of Jesus as if they were poetry. At the first suggestion this will probably to most minds appear an extravagance ; for, however poetical a speaker may be and however steeped in imagery his language, no speaker would think of uttering himself in actual verse ; and, if he did, he would be proved thereby to be the reverse of a good speaker. While, however, this is true of the English language, it has to be remembered that the Hebrew prophets, no less than the Hebrew poets, made use of parallelism, and, as Jesus was in the line of the prophets, He may have done the same. Besides, the parables of Jesus contain unquestionably a great deal of the essence of poetry, and their form is more elaborate than most readers may have observed. In not a few scarcely a word could be altered without doing injury ; while in some, as, for example, the Parable of the Last Judgment, it is the easiest thing in the world to sing the words, even in English. Professor Briggs was able to point out certain distichs and tristichs which seemed to be more full of meaning when read as verses of poetry, such as :

> Whosoever exalteth himself shall be humbled,
> But whosoever humbleth himself shall be exalted,

and :

> Ask, and it shall be given you ;
> Seek, and ye shall find ;
> Knock, and it shall be opened unto you ;

but, when he proceeded to give heptastichs, decastichs, and even dodecastichs, he did not succeed in keeping up the impression of reality ; and, when he ventured to alter the text wholesale, in order to bring it into conformity with the supposed parallelism, it was felt that he was going outside science. Still, the suggestion of this scholar was not without value, and the student of the words of Jesus will not infrequently recall it with advantage, when the language appears on the point of bursting, as it not seldom does, beyond the limits of prose. A saying like, " Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow ; they toil not, neither do they spin : yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these," manifestly proceeded from a mind so steeped in poetic feeling that it can only have been an accident whether it made use of the poetic form or not.

CHAPTER III

THE PSALMS

I

THERE is a sense in which all the books of the Bible may be spoken of as equally important. It is the same sense in which every member of the body may be regarded as equally essential: it is essential to the symmetry and perfection of the whole. If even the smallest joint of the smallest finger were wanting, the body would be mutilated. In this sense every book of Scripture may be spoken of as being of equal importance. Each has in it the same divine breath; it is a note in the perfect strain of revelation; and its absence would cause an ugly blank and would spoil the beauty of the whole. But there is another sense in which the books of the Bible may be said to be of very various value, just as the organs and members of the body are of unequal importance. In this sense the little finger is of far less importance than the eye; and the hair is far less essential than the heart, which is the very seat of life. So, there are books of the Bible which embody the message of the whole far more amply

than others; and there are books which contribute far more than others to the edification of the people of God.

Judged by such a test, the Psalms would undoubtedly occupy the foremost place among the books of the Old Testament. If the Bible of an average Bible-reader were examined, this book would be found to be far more thumbed than its neighbours. It has drawn forth more than any other the praises of Bible-readers of all classes and of all generations. The late Mr. Gladstone issued from the press an edition of the Psalter, accompanied by a concordance compiled with his own hand; and, in a chapter on the Psalms in his volume entitled *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*, he mentions the interesting fact that the late John Bright once, in conversation with him, remarked that on the Book of Psalms, as it stands, he would be content to stake the great question whether or not there exists a divine revelation. Elsewhere he said himself—and the testimony came with peculiar force from so enthusiastic a student of Homer—that all the wonders of Greek civilisation, heaped together, were less wonderful than the simple Book of Psalms. Sibbes, one of the Puritan divines, says that, if the Scriptures be compared to the body, the Psalms may well be the heart; and Hooker, the foremost writer in the opposite camp, calls the Psalms the choice and flower of all things profitable in other books.

Melanchthon calls this book the most beautiful in the whole world; and Luther, among many similar remarks, asks: "Where are more beautiful words of joy than the Psalms of praise and prayer? There thou seest into the heart of all the saints, as into fair and pleasant gardens, as into heaven itself, and walkest amongst the heart-rejoicing flowers, the happy and gladsome thoughts which rise to God and His goodness. And, again, where findest thou deeper and more touching words of sorrow than in the Penitential Psalms? There thou seest again into the heart of all the saints, as if into death or hell itself. How dark and gloomy it is there, when God hides His face! And, when they speak in fear and hope, it is in such words that no painter could give the colours and no Cicero the language." Calvin, perhaps the greatest of all the commentators on the Psalter, says of it: "I may truly call this book an anatomy of all the parts of the soul, for no one can feel a movement of the Spirit which is not reflected in this mirror. All the sorrows, troubles, fears, doubts, hopes, pains, perplexities, stormy outbreaks by which the hearts of men are tossed, have been here depicted to the very life."

The late Dr. John Ker, in a choice little work entitled *The Psalms in History and Biography*, made a collection of tributes paid to this book by famous men; and it would be easy to add to the number, because scarcely any devout scholar has

been able to occupy his mind long with this book of Scripture without breaking into laudation of its heights and depths. The rest of Dr. Ker's work is devoted to incidents in which single Psalms or verses of Psalms have been made precious to God's people; and many of these also contain enthusiastic and grateful recognition of the divine value of the book; and for everyone who has had occasion to express such sentiments in public there have been tens of thousands who have expressed the same in private.* Every crisis in national or personal history tends to make the Psalms more precious; the present period of storm and stress being no exception to the rule. Never before have Christian minds turned more instinctively to this book, certain of finding expression for their deepest emotions. The truth is, appreciation for the Psalter is a test both of literary perception and of saintliness; and the aspect of this book, in a copy of the Bible in constant use, may serve to anyone as an index of his own spiritual progress.†

* Compare also PROTHERO: *The Psalms in Human Life.*

† The author may be allowed to mention, that in both his pastorates, at Kirkcaldy and at Glasgow, he lectured through the Psalms at the Prayer Meeting, not omitting a single Psalm or giving to any of them more than a single evening. He always read beforehand the best scientific commentary, HUPFELD'S, and the best practical one, SPURGEON'S, generally adding, besides, something from other famous expositors, such as CALVIN or EWALD, DELITZSCH or CHEYNE; and from the works of these scholars he derived not a little enrichment; but it was to the text itself, as its

II

We call the whole book the Psalms of David; and once at least in the New Testament it is called simply "David." Yet it has never been the sober opinion of the Church that David wrote all the Psalms. As is well known, there are in our Bible over many of them superscriptions, mentioning, among other things, who wrote them; but these superscriptions do not attribute quite the half of the whole hundred-and-fifty to the Hebrew king. They ascribe twelve to Asaph, a friend of David; eleven to the Korahites, a family of Levites, who had charge of the temple music; one each to Ethan and Heman, also Levites; one to Solomon, and one to Moses. In this way about a hundred are accounted for; but the rest are anonymous; that is to say, it is acknowledged that their authors are unknown.

But who put the names above those the authors of which are mentioned? Unfortunately this is a very obscure point. Some have, indeed, supposed it was done by the authors themselves. But it is more probable that these superscriptions form no part of the inspired Word, but merely express the knowledge or the conjectures of those who

reality, variety and spiritual power revealed themselves to his mind week by week in ever fresh surprise and delight, that he owed many of the happiest hours of his life.

collected the pieces and arranged them in their present form.

If this be so, the question arises, Can we be sure that their information was correct? It was manifestly defective, for they have rendered no account of the fifty anonymous Psalms. But can we rely on it being correct as far as it goes? Here again, unfortunately, the answer is very dubious, some being inclined to put a great deal of reliance on these names, while others attach to them no importance whatever. The worst is that there are at least one or two cases where they are manifestly wrong, and this raises prejudice against them all.

If, then, the superscriptions are not to be trusted, how can we ascertain the dates?

One indication, which at first sight promises well, does not help us very far. This is, that in the original the Psalter is divided into five books; and, though this division is unknown in the ordinary Bible, it is given in the Revised Version. The first book ends with Psalm xli., the last verse of which:

> Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
> From everlasting and to everlasting.
> Amen, and amen:

is in all probability an editorial addition. The second book ends with Psalm lxxii., at the close of which we find not only a somewhat more lengthened doxology, but also the curious remark:

"The prayers of David, the son of Jesse, are ended,"

where " prayers " would seem to be an equivalent for Psalms. The third book ends with Psalm lxxxix., the last verse of which is a doxology briefer than either of the two foregoing ones. The fourth book ends with Psalm cvi., in the last verse of which the doxology assumes the following form :

> Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel,
> From everlasting even to everlasting.
> And let all the people say, Amen.
> Praise ye the Lord.

At the end of the last book there is no formal doxology, unless, as some have thought, the whole of Psalm cl. be intended to serve this purpose.* In the Odes of Horace there is a similar division into four books, the utility of which, in following the growth of the poet's mind, is undeniable; and it might be thought that similar service could be derived from this division in the Psalter. Especially might the two first divisions be supposed to represent two issues of David's Psalms made by the author at different times, since the last of the second book, as has just been remarked, says that his " prayers " are ended. But, as plenty of Psalms are attributed to him in the books which follow, the meaning of this statement becomes very doubtful. The fact

* Inside this last division occur the Songs of Degrees, cxx.-cxxxiv " Songs of Ascents " these are styled in the Revised Version; and by " ascents " are almost certainly intended the pilgrimages to Jerusalem at the annual feasts. This collection was the hymn-book of the pilgrims. Other conjectures as to the meaning of the term are scarcely worthy of mention. Cox: *The Songs of Degrees.*

that Psalm xiv. in the first book and Psalm liii. in the second are almost identical would seem to show that the formation of these two books did not proceed from the author, but a compiler. The name for God in Psalm xiv. is Jehovah, but in liii. Elohim, and this difference extends to the books to which these severally belong; for the prevailing name in the first book is Jehovah and in the second Elohim; and this also is suggestive of a compiler.* In short, in this division into books we are dealing with work similar to that of the compilers of modern hymn-books, who may issue new editions, in which the numbers of pieces are increased; but this has nothing to do with dates of composition. We do not know with any certainty either when or for what purpose the division into books was made; and the utmost that can be inferred from it with confidence is that, on the whole, the earlier Psalms are those of the earlier and the later those of the later books; this being a judgment which is confirmed by the character of the Psalms themselves.

The surest indication is when in a Psalm itself there is mention made of some historical circumstance which fixes the date. Thus, if a Psalm commences, "By the rivers of Babylon we sat

* In the First Book Jehovah is found 272 times, Elohim 15; in the Second Jehovah 30 times, Elohim 164; in the Third Jehovah occurs 44 times and Elohim 43; but in the last two Books Jehovah occurs very frequently, while Elohim almost disappears.

down and wept, when we remembered Zion," it is certain that it was not written before the Exile in Babylon. If the temple be mentioned, we conclude that the Psalm must have been written after Solomon built the temple. Psalm xxiv. seems manifestly to be a description of the bringing-up of the ark to Zion on the day when David danced before it; and Psalm xlvi. is almost as certainly a celebration of the destruction of the host of Sennacherib under the walls of Jerusalem in the reign of Hezekiah. But the cases are rare in which the indications are thus clear. Even when the situation is obvious enough—when, for example, we can say that it is a victory or a coronation that is celebrated, or a defeat is deplored or an invasion dreaded—it is frequently impossible to say with precision which victory or coronation or defeat or invasion, there being several, perhaps many, occasions of the kind narrated in the history of Israel, to anyone of which it might answer.

Language might be expected to help here. In English it is quite easy, at the first glance, to distinguish between pieces written in Chaucer's time and pieces written in the twentieth century, or in French between what was written in the age of Montaigne and what was written in the age of Voltaire. But, except in rare instances, there are no such differences in the Hebrew language at different periods; and it is nothing unusual to find

two scholars of equal linguistic eminence attributing the same piece, the one to the age of David and the other to that of the Maccabees—a difference of eight centuries. It would almost appear as if the language of the sacred Book had been submitted at some stage to a modernising editorial process by which the marks of the different stages through which it had passed had been obliterated.

Something may be made for this purpose of the thought or sentiment. If it be highly original and expressed in few and pregnant words, it is presumably old; if, on the contrary, it be more commonplace and expressed in well worn phrases, it is presumably late; or, if it agree closely with the sentiments of a prophet whose age is known, it is probably of about his date. But such indications are rather uncertain. To some minds that may seem highly original which to others appears the reverse; and the brevity of most of the Psalms makes it difficult to identify their sentiment with any particular age.

The truth seems to be, that in the majority of the Psalms there are no indubitable indications of date. Therefore, there is the widest scope for differences of opinion among critics, and of this full advantage has been taken, those of a conservative cast of mind inclining as a rule to early, while those who wish to be distinguished for freedom and originality of view generally favour late dates. In one generation there is a tendency in the one direction and in

another in the other. At present the tendency is to make everything as late as possible. Even so cautious a critic as Driver affirmed " with tolerable confidence " that very few of the Psalms are earlier than the seventh century B.C.; and another, less cautious, consigned practically the entire Psalter to the period subsequent to the Babylonian Captivity, and a considerable portion of it to a date later than the last of the writing prophets. But against such statements may be placed the characteristic remark of Professor A. B. Davidson, that the Psalter no more has its origin at the date of the Babylonian Captivity than the Thames takes its rise at London Bridge; and there are certain grounds, easily comprehensible by all, which militate against a very late origin.

First, the lyrical is the earliest form of literature. Peoples destined for civilisation learn at a very early stage to sing, and they attain astonishing proficiency in expressing their sentiments in verse before they are able to record their thoughts in other forms. Now, in such prophets as Amos, Hosea and Isaiah we find, eight centuries before Christ, not only a comprehensive and well-arranged body of religious ideas, but also a very advanced perfection of literary expression; and, looking at these attainments from the human side, we ask how they were reached. Must there not have been many imperfect attempts to express the religious ideas

of Israel before such success was attained? Must not these thoughts have been expressed many a time in the fragmentary form of the lyric before they could avail themselves of the copious language of Isaiah? It would make the composition of a book like Isaiah's a literary miracle if we were not at liberty to assume that there must have been numerous lyrics, like the Psalms, in existence before his age.

Another general consideration worthy of attention is the character of the period to which the Psalter is assigned by those who carry the modern view to extremes. They place its origin after the return from the Babylonian Captivity, and assume many Psalms to be subsequent to Malachi. But what was the character of this period of history? It was parochial and uninspired. The community was extremely small, and it sank more and more under those influences which in the New Testament we see embodied in the Scribes and Pharisees. Even in the latest products of Old Testament revelation, such as Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi it is evident, the river of inspiration was drying up and literary form crumbling into dust. Now, is it credible that out of such a dry ground there should have grown a root of the magnitude and vigour of the Psalter? That a few of the more stunted trees may have grown in that age there is no reason to doubt; but that this noble forest should

have risen then is out of the question. Literature is not so utterly divorced from life. As well might the Elizabethan literature have been produced in the age of Queen Anne. In the Psalter there is the vibration of a great and vigorous national life.

A third consideration which will weigh heavily in the minds of most is the strength of the Davidic tradition. It was not for nothing that David came to be known to posterity as "the sweet psalmist of Israel."* A considerable number of Psalms fit into situations in his life, and to take them away from these attachments and send them floating uncertainly down the stream in search of other attachments is to rob them of a great deal of their interest. To deny to him a Psalm like the twenty-third, which contains the very essence of the experience of the two great periods of his life—when he was a shepherd and when he was a king†—is to reject indications which would be thankfully accepted in solving literary problems in

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

† To the end of verse 4 the imagery is that of the shepherd, but in vv. 5, 6 it is that of a king, entertaining his warriors; and the reason why the poet passes from the one to the other is that the first was not able to express nearly so fully as the second the intimacy between his soul and God. It cannot be denied that any poet might have chanced on both comparisons; but the likelihood is strong that the combination proceeded from one in whose experience both the functions had been at different times combined. The attempt made in a very popular American work, *The Song of our Syrian Guest*, to prove that the shepherd-metaphor continues to the end of the Psalm, though ingenious, is not convincing.

any other literature but that of the Bible. There is a true sense in which the whole book may still be called the Psalms of David : his stamp is on it all ; his spirit is in it all ; his was the first great Psalmist mind, all who followed him being his imitators ; and, just as a river, though swollen on its way to the ocean by a hundred tributaries, still retains its own name, so to the end of time will David's name be given to the river of sacred song the primary source of which was his inspired soul.

There is, however, no religious interest in ignoring the other psalmists. It matters comparatively little who the author of any particular Psalm was ; if it was not one good man, it was another.* Indeed, there is something extremely pleasant in thinking that the divine afflatus entered into many minds, rendering them capable of such efforts. Age after age, as God's revelation went on growing clearer and fuller, and as His providence changed its aspects to meet the necessities of man's changing life, ever the inspired human echo was given back from earth

* During the progress of the Robertson Smith Case Dr. Moody Stuart, a devout and scholarly man, declared that for him Psalm li. had lost its savour, if it did not come out of the penitent heart of David ; and many would still agree with him. Yet it is not only by the last two verses, which may be a later addition, that a different origin is suggested ; for how could David, after a sin which had given great occasion to the enemies of God to blaspheme, say, as is said in v. 4 :

> Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned,
> And done that which is evil in Thy sight ?

to heaven, and gem was added to gem in the treasury of song. The harp first tuned by a king was taken up by men of all ranks and conditions—princes and nobles, priests and prophets, vinedressers and shepherds—perhaps women too with the genius of Deborah and Hannah, Mary and Elizabeth. Into a single utterance one of these favoured ones might pour the experiences of a lifetime, or sometimes gather into it the essence of the experience of God's people in a generation; and now it is preserved forever, to whisper its secret to all generations of the faithful and awaken in their hearts the chord of sympathy. The greater the number of the psalmists is assumed to be, the closer is the contact into which the Psalter brings us with the generations of revelation.

III

The contents of the Psalter are of such variety that it is no easy task to reduce them under special heads; and every division must be more or less arbitrary. Yet four divisions may be indicated under which at least a great many Psalms would fall.

(1) *Divine Psalms.*—While all the lyrics admitted into the Psalter have reference to God directly or indirectly, some of them have Him for their exclusive theme. They are mere jets of emotion produced by contemplation of the divine Being—

calls to praise Him for His power and goodness or to fear Him for His holiness and omniscience. Two aspects particularly of the divine character inspire the Hebrew muse—"grace and truth," or, as they are sometimes called, "lovingkindness and faithfulness"; the one being the love of God as manifested to sinners, and the other the perseverance with which He keeps hold of those whose case He has once taken in hand. Of such Psalms no more perfect specimen could be found than Psalm c. which is an enthusiastic summons to all the inhabitants of the world to laud and bless God for what He is and what He does; and it is brief, pregnant and perfect. To the same class may be reckoned Psalms about the worship of God, like Psalm lxxxiv., in which the singer declares that a day in God's house is better than a thousand,* and those about His Word, like the Psalm cxix., in everyone of the hundred-and-seventy-six verses of which except two, the Word of God is mentioned.†

(2) *Psalms of Nature.*—Of these there is a considerable number, and, from the literary point of view, they are of unusual excellence, describing the beauty and glory of creation as the handiwork of God. Psalm viii., for example, describes the heavens by night with their starry hosts, and Psalm xix. the heavens by day, through which the sun

* Also Psalms xlii., xliii., lxiii., cxxii., cxxxii.

† Also Psalms xix., xxxiii., cxi., cxviii.

pursues his course, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. Psalm xxix. is a description of a thunder-storm, in which the tempest, rising on the waves of the Mediterranean, strikes into the mountains of Lebanon on the north and then sweeps down over the face of the country to the desert of Judah in the south. The thunder is called "the voice of Jehovah," and through the repetition of this phrase the successive peals are so skilfully imitated that the reader seems to feel the shudder with which the hinds of the forest quail beneath the branches of the cedars. Yet, as in the East a prolonged and violent storm not infrequently ends suddenly, and the moon is seen riding in a cloudless sky, so this Psalm of noise and terror closes with the word "peace." Psalm civ. is a panoramic view of the wealth and variety of the creation, following the lines of the first chapter of Genesis; and in Psalm cxlviii. all the most prominent objects in nature—sun, moon and stars, fire and hail, snow and vapour, mountains and cedars, fowl and cattle, with human beings high and low, old and young—are summoned to form themselves into a gigantic choir and together hymn the praise of the Author of their being.* In the hearts of the Hebrew psalmists there was a deep and passionate enjoyment of natural beauty; and their compositions are still teaching the generations, as these in succession come into possession

* Also Psalms xxiv., xxxiii., lxv., lxvi., lxxiv., cxlvii.

of this beautiful and wonderful world, to rise from nature up to nature's God.

(3) *Patriotic Psalms.*—This is a large and varied class. Some countries are remarkable for their power of casting a spell over their children and making these devoted to their soil and proud of their history; and no country has in this respect excelled the Holy Land. It laid hold of the hearts of its inhabitants by its beauty, which was incomparable, by its great names and by the stirring incidents in its history. In the Psalms this patriotic fervour finds continual expression; although, true to their religious standpoint, the Psalms look upon the history not as a record of human heroes, but as the work of Jehovah. Many Psalms are poetical renderings of historical events. The great event especially in which the national existence originated—the deliverance from Egypt—was an inexhaustible theme, and all its features, such as the contest with Pharaoh, the plagues of Egypt, the passage of the Red Sea, and the wanderings in the Wilderness, were commemorated for encouragement and warning, in Psalms like lxxvii. and lxxviii., cv. and cvi., cxxxv. and cxxxvi. As has been already remarked, later incidents were sometimes put into song at the time of their occurrence. Thus Psalm xxiv. describes the bringing-up of the ark to Mount Zion, Psalms xlvi. and xlviii. the destruction of the host of Sennacherib, and Psalms cxxvi. and

cxxxvii. the Babylonian Captivity, the latter, which begins,

> By the rivers of Babylon,
> There we sat down, yea, we wept,
> When we remembered Zion,

being perhaps the most pathetic outburst of patriotic feeling ever penned.*

Patriotic sentiment centred in the capital of the country, which accordingly comes in for ample notice from the sacred poets, who declare that they take pleasure in her stones and that her very dust to them is dear :

> If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
> Let my right hand forget her cunning.
> Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
> If I remember thee not ;
> If I prefer not Jerusalem
> Above my chief joy.

It was a beautiful city ; and, besides, it laid hold of religious minds as the centre of worship. The sacred singers loved to describe the pilgrims trooping up from every corner of the land to the annual festivals, and the multitudes in the streets, in their holiday array and the happiness of their unity, are compared to the dewdrops of the morning glistening on far-off Hermon.†

There was still another association of the Holy

* Also Psalms xlvii., xlviii., lx., lxxiv., lxxvi., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxi., lxxxiii., lxxxix., cii., cxiv., cxxiv., cxxix., cxliv.

† Psalm cxxxiii. 3. Also lxxxiv., lxxxvii., cxxii., cxxv., cxxix., cxxxvii., cxlvii.

City which deeply touched the heart—it was the seat of government and the residence of the Davidic house. Loyalty is a conspicuous note of these compositions, a considerable number of which might be styled Royal Psalms. Psalms lxxv. and ci., for example, embody the reflections of a prince on his accession to the throne; Psalm xx. is a prayer for the king going forth to battle, and Psalm xxi. a thanksgiving for his victorious return; Psalms lxxxvii., lxxxix. and cxxxii. are prayers for the continuance of the Davidic line.* These Royal Psalms culminate in a class which may be termed Messianic, in which is predicted the coming of a King in David's line who is to be greater than David and to rule over a kingdom which shall know no limits and have no end. In some respects these are the loftiest flights of Hebrew poetry; and among them Psalms ii., lxxii. and cx. are the most remarkable—Psalm ii. celebrating the Messiah as the Prince of Victory, Psalm lxxii. as the Prince of Peace, and Psalm cx. as the Priest-King after the order of Melchizedek; for to psalmists, as well as to patriarchs and prophets, it was vouchsafed to behold the day of Christ afar-off and to be glad.†

* Also Psalms xlv., lxi., lxiii., lxxii., cxxxviii.

† The national Psalms may be much more numerous if there be reality in a theory, put forth recently with confidence, that the "I" of the Psalms is frequently not the individual but the nation. It is contended that in many passages where an individual seems to be complaining of the misrepresentation and cruelty perpetrated

(4) *Psalms of Life.*—These form the largest and most varied section; and in them all the incidents of human life, from the cradle to the grave, and all the vicissitudes of joy and sorrow through which the heart can pass, are poetically described with the light of God upon them. Psalm cxxxix., for example, touches with incomparable delicacy of feeling, as well as depth of thought, on the mystery of birth; Psalm xlv. is a marriage hymn; Psalms cxx. and cxxviii. present matchless pictures of the happiness of home; Psalm xxx. is a thanksgiving on recovery from illness; Psalm lxxi. is an old man's prayer; and Psalm xc. is a threnody on human mortality.

There is a theory of life running through the Psalter from beginning to end. It is the same as that which is discussed in the Book of Job; and, as will be noticed in the chapter on that book, it is laid down with absolute simplicity in Psalm i., which may have been intended as a kind of introduction to the whole book. At all events the

by personal enemies, it is really the nation that is crying out under the tyranny of foreign oppression. Although the undue extension of this notion would deprive many Psalms of their chief interest, which consists in the personal note, there may be in it a good deal of truth; and it may throw light on what are known as the Imprecatory Psalms (xxxv., lii., lviii., lix., lxix., lxxxiii., cix., cxxix., cxxxvii.); because the vindictive spirit betrayed in these is much less difficult to account for if, instead of being individual resentment, it is the voice of a nation complaining to Heaven against the tyrant and oppressor.

truth which it expresses is repeated in the Psalter in so many forms that it may be called the Wisdom of the Psalms. Godliness, it teaches, will prosper under the blessing of God, but iniquity will sooner or later bring retribution on the heads of those who practise it. In harmony with this doctrine many Psalms denounce the curse and the judgment of God against evildoers, while others describe the sunny side of the picture—the welfare of those who have chosen the will of God as their rule of life.* Of the latter class—the Happy Psalms, as they may be designated—the gem is Psalm xxiii., "the most complete picture of happiness," as the author of *Ecce Homo* has called it, "which ever was or can be drawn."† On the other hand, the sacred singers are sometimes plunged in misery; but well do they know for what reason: it is because they have fallen into sin. Seven of their outbursts of confession are called the Penitential Psalms; but these do not exhaust this class. The greatest of them is Psalm li., which is usually looked upon as a memorial of David's backsliding, but from its profundity and pathos is well fitted to be the vehicle for the penitence of the whole world.‡

* Besides Psalm i. see also xxv., xxxiv., xxxvii., xlix., lii., lxxiii., xci., xcii., xciv., xcvii., ciii., civ., cxii., cxxv., cxxviii., cxlv., cxlvi.

† Psalms iv., xvi., xxiv., xxvii., xxxvi., xxxvii., xliii., xlvi., xlviii., lxi., lxii., lxiii., lxvi., lxvii., lxxiii., lxxxiv., lxxxv., xcii., ciii., cxi., cxvi., cxxi., cxxviii., cxxxviii.

‡ Also vi., xxxii., xxxviii., cii., cxxx., cxliii.

It is not always the case, however, that the people of God, when they fall into misfortune, are able to trace their calamities to their own misdeeds. On the contrary, they have sometimes to suffer for their goodness; and, in such a case, what becomes of the maxims of Psalms i. and the Wisdom of the Psalter? What becomes of these, again, when the wicked are seen to prosper? For sometimes these do prosper; they even prosper by means of their wickedness:

> They are not in trouble as other men,
> Neither are they plagued like other men;
> Therefore pride is as a chain about their neck,
> Violence covereth them as a garment.
> Their eyes stand out with fatness:
> They have more than heart could wish.
> They scoff, and in wickedness utter oppression:
> They speak loftily.
> They have set their mouth in the heavens,
> And their tongue walketh through the earth.*

This was the great puzzle of the saints in the Old Testament; to some it may still be the puzzle of life. Psalmist after psalmist confesses that it had almost made him an atheist, and that it had forced from his lips words which were a scandal to the youthful and timorous. In some of the profoundest compositions of the Book of Psalms we are allowed to see the human mind wrestling with this problem, as

* Psalm lxxiii. 3-9.

we shall more fully see it doing in the Book of Job.* To the reader of the New Testament the solution of the difficulty is belief in a life to come, where the inequalities of present lots will be redressed, and conduct, good or bad, will receive its just retribution. But the doctrine of immortality was but faintly revealed in the Old Testament. Apparently it was the will of God that, before this splendid secret was disclosed, His people should first learn thoroughly the lesson that even for this life godliness is best: even if there were no life to come, to serve God and live in His favour would be the best way of spending our time on earth. It is in this conviction that these perplexed spirits in the Psalter come to rest: they are persuaded that God's love, even accompanied with suffering, is better than godless prosperity—one day of God's favour better than a lifetime of sinful pleasure.

But, when they were able to climb as high as this, they sometimes obtained a glimpse of the immortal country. In their intensest moments of communion with God the conviction overmastered them that they were united to Him by a tie which nothing — not even death — could sever. Few perhaps attained to such hopes, and fewer may have been able long to keep the heights they were competent to gain. But this reaching-forth of the human spirit in the direction of its immortal birth-

* See Psalms xxxvii., xlix., lii., lxxiii., xciv., cxxii.

right was the preparation for the revelation which was to be made by Him who brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel. The sweet singer of Psalm lxxiii., after a penitent account of how he had been baffled by the problem, being like a beast in his ignorance, yet rises to this lofty strain :

Nevertheless I am continually with Thee ;
Thou hast holden my right hand.
Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel,
And afterward receive me to glory.
Whom have I in heaven but Thee ?
And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.
My heart and my flesh faileth :
But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.

But the most serene and musical expression of this hope is in Psalm xvi.:

I have set the Lord always before me :
Because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth :
My flesh also shall dwell in safety.
Thou wilt not leave my soul to Sheol ;
Neither wilt Thou suffer Thy holy one to see corruption.
Thou wilt show me the path of life :
In Thy presence is fulness of joy ;
In Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

IV

What has just been said about the hope of immortality shows the connection between the Psalter and the revelation of grace and truth in Jesus Christ ;

and the same is further illustrated by what was said above about Messianic Psalms. But the connection between this book of the Bible and our Lord Jesus Christ is of a still more extensive and varied character. The quotations of Jesus prove that this was His own favourite book in the Old Testament; and it is with a strange wistfulness that we hear falling from His lips, on the cross, the verse from Psalm xxii., "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" as well as the prayer from Psalm xxxi., which formed His dying utterance, "Into Thine hand I commit My spirit." Into this last quotation, however, He introduced a characteristic alteration, by commencing it with the word, "Father," adapting it for Christian use by the introduction of His own favourite name for God. Such modification was carried much further by the martyr Stephen, who, in dying, addressed the same prayer to the Saviour Himself, in the words, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." This is a still closer adaptation to Christian use; and these two august examples convey a profound hint as to the spirit in which to read the Old Testament. Many an aspiration in the Psalter can only be fully satisfied by Christ, and many a divine promise can only be fulfilled through Him. To him, for example, who penned Psalm xxiii. and to the Old Testament saints who sang it after him every verse had a deep meaning, but to

us every verse has a meaning far more profound. What was silver to them, is gold to us, since the day when Jesus exclaimed, "I am the Good Shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

CHAPTER IV

LAMENTATIONS

I

Of all the poetical books of the Old Testament this is probably the one least generally known; yet it is the one about which our information is most complete. About the circumstances in which some of these books were produced we know, it must be acknowledged, little or nothing with certainty; we cannot fix their dates to within hundreds of years; but we can tell precisely the circumstances in which this book arose; and we can fix its date to within at the most a year or two; some would say, to within a month or two.*

In the year 588 B.C. the city of Jerusalem was compassed round by the Babylonians, and, after a siege of a year-and-a-half, during which the inhabitants were spared none of the extremities of such a situation, it fell into the hands of the enemy, who burned it to the ground and transported its inhabitants, a few excepted, to far-off Babylonia. Those who stayed behind attempted to organise

* Bleek argues that it was written between the surrender and the destruction of the city.

themselves in the empty country; but they were attacked in their weakened condition by the predatory tribes living on their borders and harassed to such a degree that at last, panic-stricken and demoralised, they set off for Egypt, to see if any refuge could be found for them there.*

The book has for its theme this catastrophe of the holy nation and, especially, of the Holy City; and it is evident that it was written at the time by one who was not only an eye-witness of the scenes depicted, but felt to the very depths of his soul the pain and horror of the tragedy.

II

There is one man, well known to us, who was on the spot during all these events. For many years the prophet Jeremiah had been foretelling that this calamity was coming upon the capital of his country. But he spoke to deaf ears. The false prophets, by whom he was surrounded, made light of his warnings and assured those who listened to them that he was entirely mistaken: the city of Jehovah could never be given over into the hands of the heathen. To such flatterers the people were only too ready to listen; and the heads of the community were so irritated by what they called Jeremiah's pessimistic

* Ewald contends that the book was written after the fugitives arrived in Egypt, and was used at a mournful anniversary-celebration of the events.

croakings that they shut his mouth by casting him into prison. It turned out, however, that he was a true prophet; and he lived to see the fulfilment of the worst which he had predicted. He was in Jerusalem all through the siege and the subsequent destruction of the city; and, after the transportation of the inhabitants had taken place, he was among the small remnant who stayed for a time in the empty country. The migration to Egypt was not in accordance with his will or judgment; but he was compelled by the force of circumstances to go thither with the rest.

It is very natural, therefore, to suppose that he was the author of the book. This, no doubt, is why it is separated in our Bible from the rest of the poetical books and inserted after Jeremiah's prophecy. In the Septuagint it is introduced with the following superscription: "And it came to pass, after Israel was led into captivity and Jerusalem laid waste, that Jeremiah sat weeping, and lamented with this lamentation over Jerusalem, and said." These words, however, do not occur in the Hebrew, which nowhere supplies the name of the author.

Jeremiah has always been supposed to be the author till the present day, when it is the fashion to suppose a new author wherever there is the faintest pretext for doing so.* The reasons which have

* "Whenever the writer pauses to take breath," says MATTHEW ARNOLD. An amusing yet suggestive instance of the lengths

been discovered for attributing Lamentations to another than Jeremiah are of the most microscopic order ; yet they have appeared sufficient to a certain school. It is allowed, however, that the writer was living at the same time as Jeremiah and went through the same experiences. Bunsen made the suggestion that he may have been Baruch, Jeremiah's loved disciple.

The question is of comparatively little interest, and it has no religious importance whatever. It would be gratifying to know that, besides Jeremiah, there was another gifted son of Israel in those days who loved Zion with an affection as passionate as is displayed in this book and was able to express in such enduring literary form the meaning of the tragic events through which he and his fellow-countrymen were passing. But Nature is perhaps hardly so prodigal of her gifts.

The genius of Jeremiah was a rare and peculiar

to which biblical criticism of this kind can go occurs in the work of Dr. GORDON referred to in the Preface. First he separates Lamentations as a whole from Jeremiah. Then he finds chapters ii. and iv. to present strong points of resemblance, yet he assumes for them separate authors. Chapters i. and v. also exhibit similarities, yet they are by different authors, writing later than the first couple. Chapter iii. is a great summing-up of the entire situation, but is by a fifth author, writing later still. This is not literary criticism at all, but the nervousness of a youthful scholar, afraid of being accused for leaving unregistered any suggestion of the learned, however puerile. If applied all round, it would separate half the great literary names of antiquity from their property

one, but it could not have been more worthily embodied than in the profound impression made on the writer of this book by his country's calamities and the religious view he takes of the situation. It is, also, a noteworthy circumstance that we know from other Scripture that Jeremiah was a lament-writer. Of course a man might be a prophet without possessing the peculiar gift of the poet; but Jeremiah not only wrote oetry, but this kind of poetry; he wrote a lament on the death of Josiah.* There are some peculiarities in the language of the Lamentations which do not occur in Jeremiah's prophecy; but this is no more than might be expected when a writer is passing from one species of composition to another; and, on the other hand, there are many striking resemblances, and among them certain phrases so characteristic of Jeremiah's style that they may almost be called his cipher.† By far the most conclusive proof,

* 2 Chron. xxxv. 25. Dr. Driver takes no notice of this fact, when stating the reasons *pro* and *con* in his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament.*

† What can be the use of quoting as arguments against Jeremiah's authorship, as Dr. Driver does, single words occurring in Lamentations but not in Jeremiah, when, according to Dr. Driver's own theory, these words were current at the time and as accessible to Jeremiah as to any of his contemporaries? In a case like this, whilst striking resemblances of word or phrase are important evidence, minute verbal differences have no weight whatever. Another argument to which Dr. Driver gives prominence, as proving that at least a portion of the book is not by Jeremiah, is that, while, in the three poems after the first, two of the initial

however, of the authorship is the account of Jeremiah's personal experience given in the third chapter. Here the facts of the prophet's history are described with autobiographical fulness; and who else could have used the opening words of that great chapter, "I am the man that hath seen affliction"? Only a prominent public character could have presumed to apply such a description to himself, and whom does the grandiose phrase fit so well as the typical sufferer of the age?*

III

The form of the book is of course poetical; but there are certain peculiarities in its poetry which deserve to be noticed.

The book is not a continuous poem, but a collection of five separate poems, all of the same character and all on the same theme; and, in our version, the book is so divided that each poem just fills a chapter.

The poems belong to the elegiac species of poetry, and we should call the separate pieces elegies or

Hebrew letters change places, they occupy in the first poem their usual positions. But he does not mention the simple suggestion of EWALD, that in the first poem an editorial hand may have altered the arrangement. The verses read better, in EWALD's opinion, when their initial letters stand as in chapters ii., iii., iv.

* The interpretation of those who do not accept Jeremiah's authorship of the book is that the nation personified speaks here. But in chapter i. the nation is personified as a woman.

dirges or laments. *Kinah* is the Hebrew term; and this species of poetry seems to have been much cultivated in Israel. In the Bible we possess not a few other laments besides these of Jeremiah. They appear to have been frequently composed on the death of persons prominent in the public eye or beloved by a large circle of acquaintance; and it is not unlikely that they were sung in connection with the funeral-rites. But they might also be composed in commemoration of public calamities; and there are some very remarkable prophetic laments, predicting the destruction of cities, with the accompanying scenes of woe and desolation.*

But there is a still more remarkable peculiarity to be mentioned in these laments of Jeremiah. The first four of them are acrostics on the Hebrew alphabet; and, stranger still, in the great third chapter each successive letter begins three successive verses. The fifth chapter has the same number of verses as it would have if it were such an acrostic also; but for some unknown reason the acrostic form has been dropped. This strikes us as a very peculiar thing. A form so artificial, it might be

* Driver has a valuable note on the form of the Hebrew lament; and Budde (in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, iv. 5) says of the *kinahs:* "These were uniformly composed in verses of two members, the length of the first of which stands to that of the second in the proportion of 3 : 2, giving rise to a peculiar limping rhythm."

thought, must cramp the thinking and crush out all naturalness. Yet it is not uncommon in Hebrew poetry. As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, it appears in several of the Psalms, culminating in Psalm cxix., in which each successive letter of the alphabet is the initial letter of no fewer than eight successive verses. It is essentially of the same nature as parallelism, alliteration, metre and rhyme. It appears to be the nature of poetical thought to submit to such restraints and yet be able to move with more grace and freedom than in the slovenly garb of common speech. Odd as this acrostic form seems to us, it probably appeared more natural to an ancient poet than rhyme would have done, which seems to us so natural. It was apparently resorted to when the material of the poem consisted of a great many somewhat similar remarks and an artificial thread was required on which to string the separate thoughts.*

IV

The picture painted in the Lamentations is one of colossal sorrow. The siege and the sack of cities have always been horrible incidents in history, but the enemies by whom Jerusalem was destroyed were notorious for cruelty and ruthlessness. In their

* Driver alleges this acrostic form as an argument against attributing the book to Jeremiah, "who, in his literary style, followed the promptings of nature"!

own annals and in the artistic delineations of their practices in war which have been dug in recent times from beneath the sands of the desert, this has been made painfully evident. At the height of their power the Babylonians not only practised the most revolting inhumanities, but gloried in them; and they had many reasons for not sparing Israel.

A most pitiful description is given of the extremities endured during the siege—especially the sufferings arising from famine. The children swooned with hunger and cried for bread to their mothers, who had none to give. The aged gave up the ghost, "while they sought their meat to relieve their souls." The famished crept through the streets like grey and feeble ghosts. Those who had all their lives before lived delicately and been clothed with scarlet were reduced to such straits that they were willing to part with anything for a morsel of bread. Of the nobles* it is said that once "they were purer than snow, they were whiter than milk, they were more ruddy in body than rubies, their polishing was of sapphire," but now, as the effect of famine, "their visage is blacker than a coal; they are not known in the streets" (so disfigured are they); "their skin cleaveth to their bones; it is withered, it is become like a stick." A dark rumour was even in circulation that mothers, mad with hunger, had

* In Authorised Version "Nazarites."

sodden their own children, to keep themselves in life.

After the siege, ensued the indescribable horrors of the sack of the city, when the gates were burst open, and the cruel and brutal soldiery, irritated by long delay, rushed in, to wreak their will on the doomed inhabitants. Every home had to endure its own share of cruelty and shame. But above all private grief towered the public calamity. Everything noble and venerable, to which patriotic affection and religious feeling clung, was ruthlessly dishonoured. To crown all, in the temple was heard the ribald noise of the enemy, loud as had been in happier days on the same spot the mirth of the solemn festivals. "The adversary has spread out his hand upon all her pleasant things; for she hath seen that the heathen are entered into her sanctuary, concerning whom Thou didst command that they should not enter into Thy congregation."

Then followed the deportation of the inhabitants to Babylon, in which king and princes, priests and prophets, high and low, were all mingled in a common degradation; and, as the long procession moved away, they could see, or seemed in their melancholy hearts to see, the ancient and implacable enemies of Israel, such as the Edomites, drawn up along the path, as scornful and exultant spectators of their misery.

A remnant were left behind, among whom was

the author of the Lamentations. But their lot was perhaps the most calamitous of all. Not only were they constantly harassed by the incursions of the skirmishers from the desert and caused to live in perpetual fear, but they had before their eyes the ruins of their country and their capital. The gates were sunk in the ground and the bars broken; the city was a heap of ruins, and silence reigned in the streets. If "a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things," they now tasted the cup to the dregs; for, amidst the silence of the deserted city, they remembered the days of music and mirth, calling to mind especially the happy pilgrim bands which used to make vocal the roads of the country, now deserted, and crowd the courts of the temple, now in ruins. No wonder they lamented: "How is the gold become dim! How is the most pure gold changed!"

To all this history of sorrow the author of Lamentations gives complete and sympathetic expression. His book is full of tears. "Mine eye runneth down with rivers of water," he says, "for the destruction of the daughter of my people." In the first chapter he personifies Israel as a woman, weeping and appealing to the whole world: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow." But the author had a deeper purpose than merely to give vent to the national grief. All through these poems the

minds of those for whose use they were composed are directed, in a truly prophetic spirit, to the cause of their sufferings. The Babylonians were not the cause : they were merely the instruments of a Higher Will. It was God who was chastising His people ; and they were chastised because they had sinned. " The Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions " ; " The Lord is righteous ; for I have rebelled against His commandment." Such is the undertone from first to last below the record of calamity ; and the poet seeks to impress his fellow-sufferers with the conviction, that hope lies only in acknowledging their iniquity and seeking forgiveness from Him against whom they have offended.

The most remarkable, however, of all the five chapters is the middle one. The two on either side may be said to lean up against it, while it towers above them all. In it Jeremiah comes forward to speak in his own person, beginning with the words already quoted : " I am the man that hath seen affliction." He goes on to give a poetical rendering of his own history, for the purpose of showing the right way of dealing with trouble. His fellow-countrymen had just come into trouble, but he had been a man of sorrows all his life. Years before their chastisement commenced, the hand of God had been laid on him : " He hath bent His bow and set me as a mark for the arrow. He hath

caused the shafts of His quiver to enter into my reins. I am become a derision to all my people and their song all the day." His personal grief could have been described in the very words which would now best describe their public calamities. But he had discovered for himself the way out of trouble, and he could now teach it to them. At first he had agitated himself and cried out against the hand by which he was being chastised. His whole being was in tumult and refused to be comforted. But, when he became still and humbled himself, then the day broke and the daystar arose in his heart. The most delightful and comforting truths came pouring into his mind, in the strength of which he surmounted sorrow, and, though outward trouble did not cease, he was able to rise above it.

It is at this point that there occur a dozen or score of verses totally different from the rest of this book. The major part of the book is steeped in tears, but this portion is flushed with sunshine :

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.
They are new every morning ; great is Thy faithfulness.
The Lord is my portion, saith my soul ; therefore will I hope in Him.
The Lord is good unto them that wait for Him, to the soul that seeketh Him.
It is good that a man should hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.
It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

For the Lord will not cast off for ever.
For, though He cause grief, yet will He have compassion according to the multitude of His mercies.
For He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

These verses are like a bed of water-lilies lying on the surface of a brackish and desolate mere; or, if the rest of the book be compared to a sky full of black and dripping clouds, this portion is like a rainbow arched athwart them, speaking of hope in the depths of desolation and showing the way to reach it. Here sounds the true evangelical note, which echoes all through the Scriptures, and this leads up to the proposal with which, at the close, Jeremiah appeals to his fellow-sufferers: "Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."

Thus the book has not merely an historical and poetical interest, but it handles with inspired power the problems of sin and suffering, and points clearly out the way to God.

As we close this book of Scripture, the image which remains in our minds is that figure of the Septuagint—Jeremiah seated on the ruins of Jerusalem, with the calamity of his country, in all its compass and significance, mirrored in his tear-filled heart. But that figure makes the eye travel forward to another. Another son of Israel and lover of Jerusalem, when He was come near, as He descended the Mount of Olives, beheld the city and wept over it. Strange city! What sons that

nation bore! how amazingly they loved her! and how unmotherly was her treatment of them! Some said, in the days of our Lord's flesh, that He was Jeremiah.* And between the prophet and the Saviour there were not a few resemblances. Both loved the people and the capital of their country with passionate affection. Both were repaid with deadly cruelty and persecution, and yet they could not cease to love. Each of them was the man of sorrows of his own age. But from this Book of Lamentations we may draw a profounder resemblance. Jeremiah, in this book, attempted to solve the twin mysteries of suffering and sin; and may we not say that to do this was the purpose of the entire life of Christ? Well did Jeremiah solve the mystery in his degree; but it was reserved for the Son of God to provide the perfect solution, when He made sin the background against which to display to the universe the glory of love divine, and when, by His suffering even unto death, He brought to the world joy unspeakable and life everlasting.

* Matt. xvi. 14.

CHAPTER V

PROVERBS

I

NEARLY every country possesses proverbs of its own. The English language is specially rich in them; and a recently published collection of the proverbs of Scotland contains nearly ten thousand specimens. Perhaps there is nothing else from which a more accurate idea of the character of any people can be obtained. Thus, the prudent, thrifty, reticent nature of the Scot is admirably reflected in his proverbs. Proverbs are sparks from the fire of the national genius. They are the nation's best wisdom applied to the details of life.

A proverb may be defined as a brief saying which arrests attention by its truth and sticks in the memory through the felicity of its language. Many of our own proverbs consist of a couple of lines of rhyme; and the Proverbs of Scripture have a corresponding structure. Only, instead of rhyme, they make use of parallelism—a term fully explained in an earlier chapter. Very frequently it is ex-

pressed in the one line positively and in the second negatively—thus :

> The memory of the just is blessed,
> But the name of the wicked shall rot.*

The wording is, as a rule, managed with much art, not a few of the Proverbs attaining, in literary beauty, to the exquisite description given in the book itself : "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver";† while, in their power of penetrating and sticking in the mind, they come up to the description in Ecclesiastes :

> The words of the wise are as goads,
> And as nails fastened by the masters of assemblies.‡

The Hebrew term for the Proverbs suggests another characteristic of them. It calls them likenesses or similes. Very often a proverb contains a picture of some natural object,§ in which the truth which it desires to convey is exhibited. For example :

> The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water.‖

Here, in a word or two, there is summoned up before the mind's eye the image of an embankment, beginning to be undermined by the water oozing through it, which, if not stopped, will soon be carrying destruction over the fields and endangering the life of man and beast ; and thus a hint which

* x. 1. † xxv. 11. ‡ xii. 11.
§ Especially in the Proverbs of the Men of Hezekiah. ‖ xvii. 14.

cannot be mistaken is given of the way in which any sin, and especially strife, swells from small beginnings to great violence, which may do incalculable mischief. This was the way in which the great Teacher Himself taught; and, indeed, His parables may be looked upon as a fuller development of the method of teaching employed by the wise King of Israel. In fact, in the original the same word stands for both parable and proverb.

Another characteristic of at least some of the Proverbs is brought out by another name which occurs sometimes, when they are called "dark sayings." Sometimes a proverb is intentionally obscure: there is another sense in the words than that which meets the ear; the meaning is buried a little beneath the surface, to provoke the mind to dig it out. The philosophy of this singular circumstance is that the human mind takes a more eager grasp of that which it has to search for; it experiences a kind of delight in discovering a secret; it enjoys the kernel all the more when it has first to crack the shell. In His parables our Lord practised the same art, saying to the disciples, when they inquired, why He spoke in parables: "To you it is given to understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to those that are without all these things are done in parables, that, hearing, they may hear, but not understand."*

* Matt. xiii. 13.

To the shallow and uninquiring the parable was a gaily painted veil, with which they were satisfied; but on the inquiring spirit of true disciples it acted as a provocation to seek to see fully the face which it partially concealed.

If, as was remarked above, the proverbs of a people are an application of the national wisdom to the details of life, so in the Book of Proverbs the great principles of revelation are applied to the details of everyday experience. The spirit of the Scriptures, which in a book like Job or St. John burns as a great, all-illuminating fire, is here diffused in a thousand sparks, everyone of which shines upon some detail of practice; and, small as each spark may be, they constitute in combination one of the lights of revelation, hung up to illuminate the path of mortals.

II

It is difficult to say how ordinary proverbs are formed. They are not, like other literary products, the work of authors whose names they perpetuate. As a rule, they are anonymous. Who, for example, have been the authors of the ten thousand proverbs of Scotland? A few of them may perhaps be traced back to persons of eminence; but this is not the case with one in a hundred; and there is no writer remembered in our literary annals as a maker of proverbs. They spring up none can tell

how. They fall from the lips of shrewd persons. They pass from mouth to mouth, being polished as they go. They are chips from experience, maxims hewn from life; and they come so directly from the general life that they almost seem to be produced from the general mind without the intervention of any individual mind at all. One is added here and another there, till, in course of time, the mass swells to enormous proportions, like a cairn to which every passer-by adds a stone.*

Was this, then, the way in which the Proverbs of Scripture were formed? Were they chips from the experience of the Hebrews, formed in the same way as our own? Natural as this idea may be, a close examination does not quite support it.

The Proverbs of Scripture do not, indeed, pretend to be all by one author or to have been all issued at the same time. In the last chapter of the book we have the Proverbs of one Lemuel, who, however, is known to us only by name. In chapter xxx.

* "What is wisdom? That sovereign word, as has often been pointed out, is used for two different things. It may stand for knowledge, learning, science, systematic reasoning; or it may mean, as Coleridge has defined it, common sense in an uncommon degree; that is to say, the unsystematic truths that come to shrewd, penetrating, and observant minds, from their own experience of life and their daily commerce with the world, and that is called the wisdom of life, or the wisdom of the world, or the wisdom of time and the ages. . . . The enduring weight of historian, moralist, political orator, or preacher depends on the amount of the wisdom of life that is hived in his pages." MORLEY: *Studies in Literature*, p. 57.

there is a contribution of about the same extent from another author, named Agur, of whom, however, we know nothing except that he has left behind him a handful of Proverbs displaying marked characteristics of their own and very unlike those of the rest of the book. Immediately before Agur's section there are five chapters xxv.-xxix., containing Proverbs said to have been collected in the reign of Hezekiah by what are called his "men," the term in all probability meaning learned men employed in his court.

The great body of the book, however, from chapter i. to chapter xxiv., professes to be from the pen of Solomon; and, although this, like almost every other tradition about the origin of a book in the Old Testament, has been called in question, it may be literally correct. That monarch's vast experience and matchless wisdom would have made this for him a natural task. We cannot, of course, tell whether or not he may have collected older proverbs and incorporated them with those of his own coinage. This may have been no more excluded by his inspiration than was St. Luke's search among historical records for the materials of his Gospel. But, if Solomon did so, he must, in passing the older proverbs through his hands, have stamped them all with his own signature; for, it is allowed, they all bear the impress of a single mind.

Not much more than the half, however, of the

book properly consists of proverbs. Only chapters x.-xxii. contain proverbs proper—that is, single verses, short and full of meaning, each complete in itself. The first nine chapters of the book, on the other hand, consist of an introduction, in which the attention of the reader is summoned to the treasure about to be opened before his eyes, and in a warm rhetorical style the gist of the whole is pressed on the mind and the heart. Here the verses do not stand each by itself, but the sense runs on without interruption through a number of them—sometimes through a whole chapter. At the close, too, of the Proverbs proper—namely, from xxii. 17 to the end of xxiv.—there is a collection, conceived in the same style as the introduction.

Thus, in the portion of the book derived from Solomon himself, we have twelve chapters of proverbs proper set in a framework of what may be termed proverbial exhortation—"apples of gold," if this beautiful saying may so soon be quoted again, "in pictures of silver"; though it may be difficult to say in this case, which is the gold and which the silver; for the frame is perhaps even more precious than the picture. Then, to this large jewel there is attached, as a pendant, the collection made by the men of Hezekiah; and below this hang the two small additions of Agur and Lemuel. A varied ornament for the Bride of Christ! and, although it may not attain to the glorious beauty of certain

of her literary jewels, it possesses a peculiar value of its own, and it could not be spared.*

III

The Book of Proverbs ranges over a greater variety of subjects than any other book of the Bible, in many parts of it a new subject being introduced in every verse. It may, therefore, seem impossible to say in a word what is the theme. But, in spite of the variety of its contents, there is a thread which runs all through the book, taking up its scattered sayings like beads on a string. This theme is Wisdom. The book is intended to teach wisdom and explain in detail the conduct of a wise man; whilst, to bring out the same sense by contrast, it likewise describes the nature of folly and the conduct of fools.

In the introductory chapters Wisdom is praised in language of the most glowing enthusiasm:

> Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom:
> Yea, with all thou hast gotten get understanding.

* "In hoc genere autem nihil invenitur, quod ullo modo comparandum sit cum aphorismis illis, quod edidit rex Salomon; de quo testatur Scriptura, "cor illi fuisse instar arenæ maris"; sicut enim arenæ maris universas orbis oras circundant, ita et sapientia ejus omnia humana, non minus quam divina, complexa est. In aphorismis vero illis, præter alia magis theologica, reperies liquido haud pauca præcepta et monita civilia præstantissima, ex profundis quidem sapientiæ penetralibus scaturientia, atque in amplissimum varietatis campum excurrentia."—BACON: *De Augmentis Scientiarum*, lib. viii., cap. 2.

Exalt her, and she shall promote thee: she shall bring thee to
honour, when thou shalt embrace her.
She shall give to thine head a chaplet of grace;
A crown of beauty shall she deliver to thee.*

She is more precious than rubies:
And none of the things thou canst desire are to be compared with
her.
Length of days is in her right hand;
In her left hand are riches and honour.
Her ways are ways of pleasantness,
And all her paths are peace.†

What is the Wisdom which the Proverbs thus praise? It is not to be identified with learning. The wise man has, indeed, the attentive ear of the scholar; but it is not to the schoolmaster or professor he listens, but to the aged and experienced. Wisdom is not to be identified with cleverness either. The wise man may not be clever; and the clever man may, in the sense of this book, be anything but wise.

The wisdom of the Proverbs is not speculative, but practical. It is the best way of conducting one's life. He is the wise man who keeps his life running on the lines appointed for it by the Creator. Man's wisdom is, in fact, the counterpart of the wisdom of God. By His wisdom God has made all things, and, among the rest, He has made this world. In the framework of His creation He has sunk lines of guidance, upon which the life of man is intended to roll smoothly forwards; and man's wisdom

* iv. 7-9. † iii. 15-17.

consists in discerning these lines and guiding his course by them. He is a wise man whose life follows the course appointed for it by God.

This is the general conception; but in the individual Proverbs the details of the wise man's life are fully set down. His conduct in business and in reference to money; the way in which he is to manage his thoughts and regulate his words; his behaviour towards the poor and towards the rich, as a friend and as a citizen—all these details are comprehensively handled; and, one might say, there is not a situation in life in which the Proverbs will not indicate how a wise man ought to act.

On the other hand, it warns against folly, by describing the conduct and the fate of the fool.

Folly does not, any more than wisdom, refer to the amount of learning or the ability which anyone possesses. The fool is not one who is deficient in intellect: on the contrary, the greater the intellect, the greater may be the folly. Folly is ignorance of the laws of right and wrong, appointed by God to regulate human existence, or disregard of these laws. Our Maker has ordained and stated that true happiness is to be found by going in a certain direction; and the man who persuades himself that he can find it by going in the opposite direction is a fool.

Folly, however, exists in two degrees. In what may be called the first degree, it belongs to those

whom this book calls "the simple ones," while in the second degree it belongs to the fools proper.

This book has a great deal to say to the simple. These are persons who are ignorant of those great and august laws which govern human life and, when they violate them, are sinning unawares. They are beginners, who do not know much of either good or evil. They are not fortified yet with good principles, but neither are they corrupted with bad ones. They constitute, in fact, the large class of persons who, without having yet chosen for themselves either good or evil, are open to be influenced in either direction by wills stronger than their own.

To these the book addresses itself with great earnestness, urging them to choose the better part. It describes Wisdom as a queen, living in a fair palace, into which she invites them :

> Wisdom hath builded her house,
> She hath hewn out her seven pillars :
> She hath killed her beasts ; she hath mingled her wine ;
> She hath also furnished her table.
> She hath sent forth her maidens, she crieth
> Upon the highest places of the city,
> Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither.*

But well does she know that these simple ones are wooed at the same time by other voices : the emissaries of temptation are sure to be at them. Against these, therefore, this book gives such pointed and

* ix. 1-4.

perpetual warning that it might almost bear the title of the Book of Temptation.

There are especially three forms of temptation with which it is never done—bad company, drunkenness and the strange woman.

Evil companions try to ensnare the simple one and make him like themselves :

> Enter not into the path of the wicked,
> And walk not in the way of evil men.
> Avoid it, pass not by it ;
> Turn from it, and pass on.
> For they sleep not, except they have done mischief ;
> And their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.*

Drunkenness is another tempter that watches for the simple :

> Who hath woe ? who hath sorrow ? who hath contentions ?
> Who hath complaining ? who hath wounds without cause ?
> Who hath redness of eyes ?
> They that tarry long at the wine ;
> They that go to seek out mixed wine.
> Look not upon the wine when it is red,
> For it giveth its colour in the cup,
> When it goeth down smoothly :
> At the last it biteth like a serpent,
> And stingeth like an adder.†

But the temptation against which the book warns most frequently and with the most passionate earnestness is what it calls " the strange woman." It is sad to think that even in that early age of the world it was necessary to enlarge so frequently on

* iv. 14-16. † xxiii. 28-32.

this topic ; and it is sadder still that, in this late age of the world and in Christian lands, it should still be necessary to do so. The Tempter of men has surely no greater triumph than when she whose soul was intended by the Creator to be the sanctuary of modesty, and whose finer nature was destined to raise the coarser nature of man to purity, is converted into a temptress, luring man to unman himself and degrade himself into a beast. This is, indeed, in some respects, the most terrible temptation to which man is exposed, and the Book of Proverbs has dared to paint it in the colours of truth :

At the window of my house
I looked forth through my lattice ;
And I beheld among the simple ones,
I discerned among the youths,
A young man void of understanding,
Passing through the street near her corner,
And he went the way to her house ;
In the twilight, in the evening of the day,
In the blackness of night in the darkness.
And, behold, there met him a woman,
With the attire of an harlot and wily of heart.
She is clamorous and wilful ;
Her feet abide not in her house:
Now she is in the streets, now in the broad places,
And lieth in wait at every corner.
So she caught him, and kissed him,
And with an impudent face she said unto him :
Sacrifices of peace offerings are with me ;
This day have I paid my vows.
Therefore came I forth to meet thee,
Diligently to seek thy face, and I have found thee.
I have spread my couch with carpets of tapestry;

With striped cloths of the yarn of Egypt.
I have perfumed my bed
With myrrh, aloes, and cinnamon.
Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning;
Let us solace ourselves with love.
For the good man is not at home.
He has gone a long journey:
He hath taken a bag of money with him;
He will come home at the full moon.
With her much fair speech she causeth him to yield,
By the flattering of her lips she forceth him away.
He goeth after her straightway,
As an ox goeth to the slaughter,
Or as fetters to the correction of the fool;
Till an arrow strike through his liver;
As a bird hasteth to the snare,
And knoweth not that it is for his life.*

* vii. 6-23. With the realism and pathos of the above sketch of one of the "simple ones" in the snares of the temptress may be compared the following picture from modern life, from the pen of one of the purest of men, as well as the choicest of writers, the late Dr. James Hamilton, Regent Square Church, London. It occurs in a volume on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, entitled *The Parable of Parables;* and the man of whom the incident is related became the founder of the celebrated publishing house of James Nisbet and Company: "On a wintry day in 1803 a lad left his native Kelso so sad at heart, that, as he stood that night on the bridge at Berwick, the tear had almost frozen on his cheek. It was his eighteenth birthday when he found himself for the first time in our great labyrinth; and on one of the first evenings after his arrival a youth who, from the same vicinity had gone up to town the previous year, took him out to see the sights. The stroll ended in a sort of back alley, and, as his companion knocked at a door, it was opened by some light-looking girls, evidently well acquainted with their visitor. With instant revulsion the newcomer started back, for instinctively he felt that it was "the house which inclineth unto death." In much agitation he exclaimed, "Oh, where are you going?" and he entreated his companion to come away. That companion only laughed and went in, and, as our friend sought his

Folly, which, in the first degree, thus belongs to the simple, belongs, in the second degree, to the fool proper. He is not one lingering on the brink of temptation: he has long ago taken the plunge; he is not only inured to it, but he is now himself a tempter of others and a scorner of those who walk

way back to his lodging, he felt very desolate. It was a cold and dreary night, and in his disheartened mood he thought that London must be a devouring monster, which swallowed up whatever came into it and changed it into the likeness of its own deformity. Here in a few months it had made a virtuous youth a profligate, and, as if walking amidst snares and pitfalls and strange mysteries of iniquity, he trembled for himself. The whole thing was too painful for him till he went into the sanctuary. But next Sabbath he enquired his way to Swallow Street. There he found the worship which he had learned to love beyond the Border, and, as he listened to the earnest sermon, he began to feel, 'God is in this place.' The little church brightened into a Bethel, and helped to cheer the following week; and then came an introduction to the minister, and a class in the Sunday-school, and the acquisition of one good friend after another; till at last the streets, which at his first arrival were haunted by gloomy phantoms and cruel ghosts, grew populous with brethren in the Lord: till he who had himself been so graciously preserved became distinguished for his efforts in preserving and strengthening younger brethren. It was on the fiftieth anniversary of that eventful day that our venerable friend, his heart overflowing with gratitude to God, told us this incident. By that time he was an honoured citizen and his name well known throughout the churches. Numbers of ministers and missionaries knew him. Many widows and orphans knew him. Nearly all our religious societies and benevolent institutions knew James Nisbet. Under God, that trying evening was the pivot on which turned the whole of his following history. If he had for a moment yielded—if, through curiosity or weakness, he had accompanied his friend across the sinful threshold—he might have shared the same fate, and in a few months, with ruined health and morals, been, like him, sent back to his native place, a shattered dying invalid."

in what he considers the tame and dull path of wisdom. He has deliberately said to evil, "Thou art my good"; and he expects pleasure and success in ways everyone of which is a contradiction of the laws for man's prosperity laid down by God. Over and over again in the Proverbs is his portrait painted at full length; and not less clearly is his fate portrayed. It is not denied that he may be happy for a time or enjoy a superficial success. But the end of these things is death; for, as one of our own proverbs says, "God comes with leaden feet, but He strikes with iron hands."

IV

The Book of Proverbs in more places than one clearly indicates its own use. It is meant to be a handbook for the journey of life. It might be termed the Murray of youth and the Baedeker of success. It points out the snares and pitfalls which menace the traveller, with the stiles and byeways which tempt him into transient pleasures but lead in the end to ruin; while, on the other hand, it describes the true prizes of life, which are worthy of pursuit, and portrays in attractive colours those types of manhood which are noble and honourable.

It is peculiarly a book for the family, to aid in the training of the young. By preference and with sympathy it describes scenes of domestic life. The old grandfather, or grandmother, for instance:

The hoary head is a crown of glory,
It shall be found in the way of righteousness.*

It loves to exhibit youth and age side by side :

Children's children are the crown of old men ;
And the glory of children are their fathers.†

Fathers receive many hints as to the upbringing of children, the general tendency being to rebuke that laxity in family-discipline which, whether arising from over-fondness, or from want of nerve and resolution, or merely from indolence and neglect, leads eventually to the ruin of the home and the misery of the pampered children. There is no other book in the Bible in which the praise of woman is so honourably expressed, and especially of woman in the capacity of wife and mother ; the whole performance winding up with a glowing poem of two-and-twenty verses devoted to the portraiture of a good woman. This is an acrostic on the Hebrew alphabet : that is to say, the successive verses begin with the successive letters.

But the book addresses itself most frequently to the young themselves, proffering its guidance, in friendly guise, to conduct them through the perils of life. It urges them to lend a willing ear to the advice of their parents and elders and to suppress in themselves the disposition to rebel against discipline ; for a child who has lost reverence for its father and mother is far on the path to ruin :

* xvi. 31. † xvii. 6.

> The eye that mocketh at his father,
> And despiseth to obey his mother,
> The ravens of the valley shall pick it out,
> And the young eagles shall eat it.*

It endeavours to attract them to the way of well-doing by picturing the joy and pride which their success will bring to their parents :

> The father of the righteous shall greatly rejoice :
> And he that begetteth a wise child shall have joy of him.
> Let thy father and thy mother be glad,
> And let her that bare thee rejoice.†

In Scotland at one time the Book of Proverbs was printed separately and used as a schoolbook; and not a few Scotsmen of eminence, among whom may be mentioned the late Professor Bain, of Aberdeen, have testified to the benefit derived from this source. It would be difficult to conceive any exercise more profitable for the family than to read over, on Sabbath evening, the chapters, from which the choicest verses might be committed to heart. These would easily stick in the fresh and retentive memories of the young, and they would prove as useful as a quiverful of arrows in fighting subsequently the battle of life.

The Book of Proverbs could not be called a very spiritual or evangelical book. It deals rather with the small things of religion than with its large and overawing mysteries. Sparks from the fire of revelation ! as was remarked above ; yet the sparks,

* xxx. 17. † xxiii. 24, 25.

if we follow them, will lead up to the fire from which they have proceeded. It used to be a common maxim that no book of the Old Testament is understood until its connection with Christ has been discovered; and in the present case this is not difficult. As has been remarked above, the human wisdom, which is its theme, is the counterpart of the divine wisdom, and it cannot be fully comprehended till we ascend to survey the original. When, however, we do so, what do we find? We find the wisdom of God embodied in Jesus Christ. All the wisdom of God, in coming forth into activity and visibility, passes through Him. It was by Christ that the Father created the world. In the New Testament Christ is called the Word of God—that is, the expression and embodiment of His wisdom—and, when, in the prologue to the Gospel of St. John, the Word is described in His relation to the Father, it is in terms borrowed from the Book of Proverbs. "In the beginning," says St. John, "was the Word, and the Word was with God;" but already in Proverbs Wisdom personified says,

> The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way,
> Before His works of old.
> I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning,
> Or ever the earth was.
> When there were no depths, I was brought forth;
> When there were no fountains abounding with water.
> Before the mountains were settled,
> Before the hills was I brought forth:
> While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields,

Nor the beginning of the dust of the world.
When He established the heavens, I was there:
When He set a circle upon the face of the deep:
When He made firm the skies above:
When the fountains of the deep became strong:
When He gave to the sea its bounds,
That the waters should not transgress His commandment:
When He marked out the foundations of the earth:
Then I was by Him, as a master workman:
And I was daily His delight,
Rejoicing always before Him;
Rejoicing in His habitable earth;
And my delight was with the sons of men."*

Thus under a thin veil there lies already in this book the truth the complete revelation of which in the New Testament was to illuminate all the ages. If the Book of Proverbs be, as was said above, a guidebook for the journey of life, then is Christ the living Guide. If its aim be to teach us wisdom, then is He, of God, made unto us wisdom and righteousness and sanctification and redemption.

* viii. 22-31.

CHAPTER VI

ECCLESIASTES

Ecclesiastes is one of the most enigmatical books in the Bible. So obscure is it that the most contradictory views have been taken by scholars of its drift and import. On the surface it appears to carry a meaning so much at variance with the general tenor of Holy Writ that from the earliest times there have been doubts as to whether it is entitled to a place in the canon of Scripture at all; and some have held that it was admitted, not because it is a portion of the divine wisdom, but for the purpose of demonstrating how far astray human wisdom may go, if left to itself. It contains not a few passages which sound like the confessions of a sceptic, who, seeing no divine hand in the arrangements of this world and recognising in man nothing which will not at death return to the dust, gives the advice, in the spirit of a sensuous epicureanism, to eat and drink and enjoy the present hour, taking no thought for the morrow. Its philosophy of life would thus be parallel with that of a little book which is said to be found in the kit of many a soldier in the present War, as it is said to be the favourite of the officers

in the trenches of the enemy—*The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.**

A patient study of the book, however, leads to the conviction that such notions are superficial, and that, though the opinions expressed in the book are peculiar, yet Ecclesiastes has a place of its own to fill as one of the component parts of the revealed mind of God. The problem with which it is occupied is one of the most momentous with which the human mind can deal, and the solution which it supplies is no less valuable than original. Ecclesiastes has, besides, very decidedly this mark of a genuine book of the Old Testament, that it points forward to the future and prepares the way for the full revelation of the truth as it is in Jesus.

I

In the book itself the author assumes two titles—the Preacher and the Son of David, King of Jerusalem. Why he calls himself the Preacher is not

* This comparison has been made in the commentary on Ecclesiastes in *The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*, by the late Dr. Plumptre, who has, besides, in the same volume, essays on Correspondences between Shakspeare and Ecclesiastes, based chiefly on the Sonnets, and between Tennyson and Ecclesiastes, based on *The Vision of Sin*, *The Two Voices*, and similar products of the late laureate's muse. In Plumptre there was a streak of genius, which lifts his commentary above the average level; and he is deserving of special mention in a series like the present because of the abounding "humanism" in his work.

explained ;* but most probably he chose this name to express the consciousness of having a weighty message to deliver, to which it would be well worth the while of all to listen. As for the other title, any of the kings of Judah might have called himself the Son of David, King of Jerusalem, but the contents of the book plainly show that the name refers to David's immediate son, King Solomon, the sad and splendid.

Solomon's life began with the eager pursuit of wisdom, but subsequently degenerated into folly. In this book he is represented as an old man, who has left both of these periods behind and, reviewing his whole career and all he has seen of the world, gathers up the lessons of experience.

Thus the book seems to be a record of the wise king's recovery to mental and spiritual sanity from the grievous errors into which for a time he had fallen. Many scholars, however, in modern times have supposed it to be the work of a poet of much later date, who, taking Solomon as the type of a man who had tried every variety of life, put into his mouth his own reflections on human existence. They allege that there are imperative reasons for this hypothesis in the language of the book and the condition of the times which it portrays. In-

* The word is Koheleth, which is puzzling as being a feminine ; and the suggestion is rather attractive that perhaps Wisdom is to be understood.

deed, the author himself does not take the trouble to keep up the literary illusion; for he says, "I was king," as if referring to something long past, whereas Solomon reigned to the end of his life, and he speaks of "all that were before me in Jerusalem," as if he were one of a line that had reigned there, instead of being only second in the list. Even so conservative a critic as Delitzsch, after a detailed examination of the linguistic peculiarities, declares that, if the book could have been written in the age of Solomon, there is no history of the Hebrew language. The wrongs and oppressions of the times, which the writer exposes with scathing force, could not have belonged to a prosperous reign like that of Solomon, or at least a king like Solomon would not have acknowledged them.

It is well known how numerous at present are the proposals to alter the traditional view of the age of the books of the Bible, and how arbitrary these often are. But in the present case the reasons appear to be so much weightier than usual that it will be worth while to pause at this point and consider how the adoption of such a theory as to the date would affect our view of the book.

In poetry it is by no means unusual for the poet, instead of speaking in his own name, to put his reflections into the mouth of someone whose life has been a conspicuous illustration of the sentiments to which expression requires to be given.

In Robert Browning's works, for example, it is the rarest thing for the poet to say anything in his own name, his genius leading him to use almost invariably the literary device of speaking through the lips of some figure real or imaginary. But let us take a simpler example. In *Scots, wha ha'e*, the poet Burns gives to the sentiment of patriotism powerful and perfect expression; he does this, however, not in his own name, but in the form of an address supposed to be delivered by Bruce to his army on the field of Bannockburn. Bruce delivered no such address; but, had he done so, this must have been its drift. The ideas to which the poem gives expression gain immensely in impressiveness through being put in this artistic form; and none would think of objecting to the procedure of the poet, as if it were a deception.

Now, Ecclesiastes is a poem; and there is no reason for denying to the poets of the Bible the use of the same literary forms as are employed by poets in general. It would, therefore, in no degree derogate from the dignity or authority of the work in the present case, if we were to assume that the writer was not Solomon, but a poet of a later age who, brooding on the mystery of human life, chose as the mouthpiece for his reflections one whose knowledge of life was proverbial and on whose history he had profoundly meditated. The book reveals with perfect truthfulness how Solomon, at the end of

his strangely chequered career, must have thought about life; here we have the essence of his wisdom and experience, whether the words are his or not. It may, therefore, safely be left to experts to discover, if it be in their power, the exact date of the composition and the situation of the author, while the rest of us are content to take home to mind and heart the divine message clothed in this poetic form.

II

The question raised in Ecclesiastes is this, What can make man truly happy? what ought he to pursue in this brief life? what is that which, if gained, makes life a success but, if missed, makes it a failure?

Surely this is a great question. Is it not the very greatest? Is it not the one which all human beings are asking all the time? What are men doing between the cradle and the grave but trying to find out what there is for which it is worth while to toil and to suffer—that is, what can make them really happy?

Looking back on his own life, Solomon declares that he has tried all the ways of it, but that his verdict on them is, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." Men are toiling to find the secret; the whole world is in a state of unrest; like the winds that never lie still, like the rivers always flowing

but never filling the sea, like the sun returning to perform the same changeless circuit every day, so the restless human heart is forever occupied with this quest. Men are always persuading themselves that they are just on the point of discovery, and that they have found a new way of it; but this is merely illusion; because in every age it is the same toilsome, painful, bootless pursuit:

> "The thing that hath been is that which shall be, and that which is done is that which shall be done, and there is nothing new under the sun."*

The first experiment in living tried by Solomon was the pursuit of wisdom:

> "I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven. I applied my heart to know and to search and to seek out wisdom and the reason of things."

He acknowledges that this was the noblest and the least unsatisfactory of all his ventures. And yet it did not satisfy:

> "This also is vexation of spirit; for in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Of making many books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh."†

* i. 9. † i. 13; i. 18; vii. 25; xii. 12.

The human mind soon reaches the boundary of its knowledge; and, the ampler the outer rim of the circle of knowledge, the larger becomes the inner rim of the realm of conscious ignorance lying beyond it. The further the mind penetrates into the region of speculation, the more numerous are the contradictions which it encounters and cannot reconcile.

> Your speculative wretch
> Is like a beast upon a barren waste,
> Round, ever round, by an ill spirit chased,
> Whilst all about him fair green pastures stretch.

Solomon's second venture, after he had tired of knowledge, was pleasure. None can have such ample opportunities of testing what luxury can do to satisfy the soul as one who has at his command the resources of a kingdom:

> "What can the man do who cometh after the king?"
>
> "I sought in mine heart to give myself unto wine and to lay hold on folly, that I might see what was that good for the sons of men which they should do under the heaven all the days of their life. I made me great works, I builded me houses, I planted me vineyards. I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits. I got me servants and maidens and had servants born in my house; also I had great possession of great and small cattle, above all that were in Jerusalem

> before me. I gathered me also silver and gold and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces. I got me men-singers and women-singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments and that of all sorts. Whatsoever mine eyes desired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy."*

What a description of the dissipations of the splendid king! But what was the upshot? Did he feel his heart satisfied with these glittering sights and enchanting sounds? Here is the verdict:

> "I looked on all the works that mine hands had wrought and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit, and there was no profit under the sun."†

This experiment has been tried thousands of times, and always with the same result. Among the wretched the case of none is so desperate as the situation of the sated voluptuary. The soul is too fine to be satisfied with these appeals to the senses. The senses themselves get cloyed with repletion. The edge of the taste becomes blunted, and stronger and stronger applications are needed, till the soul loathes itself. Nowhere is there less of real enjoyment than in what are called the haunts of pleasure,

* ii. 3-8. † ii. 1-12; iv. 3.

whether these be the drawing-rooms in which people of fashion turn night into day in the effort to forget themselves or the gayer scenes of dissipation in the capitals of the world. A Heine, on his mattress-grave, after wearing out his physical powers with indulgence, or a Byron, after disguising yet parading his own dissipations under the masks of his various heroes, would have uttered the oft-repeated maxim of this book with a grim bitterness which even the author could not command, and cried, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit."

These were the two grand experiments tried by Solomon in person; but, looking abroad over society, he saw multitudes trying a third—namely, money. The Preacher disdains to say that he had tried this himself; but he had seen others absorbed in this pursuit, and he gives the results of his observation.

He saw one who was alone: he had neither child nor brother nor wife: yet there was no end to his labour, neither did he say, "For whom do I labour and bereave my soul of good?" He saw another, who toiled all his life long with prudence and justice, and accumulated abundant wealth; but he left it to a fool and an idler, who could not take care of his inheritance and loved not the man by whom it was bequeathed to him. He saw that often riches take to themselves wings and fly away, and he who has spent his time in gathering them dies as poor as he was born. He saw men with

riches in their hands and yet unable to get any good out of them. The millionaire tosses on his couch within embroidered curtains, whilst the labouring man enjoys the sweetest sleep. The one has no appetite amidst a hundred dainties, whilst the other eats with relish the homeliest fare, seasoned with the salt of hunger. An object the enjoyment of which is thus imperilled by a hundred accidents cannot surely be the secret of life.*

This, however, is an experiment which multitudes are still trying. To millions money is the one object of regard. But how many does it make happy? In the haunts of the business-world, where the competition for wealth is keenest, do the faces and the movements of the votaries indicate that they have succeeded in the aspiration which is at the bottom of their hearts? Many a man there would confess that increase of wealth has only brought him increase of care. It has spoiled the simple joys of existence, and, with a superabundance of means for buying pleasure, he tastes little or none of it. His confession of the truth to himself is a repetition of the story of Midas, the miser king of ancient legend, who asked from the gods that whatever he touched might turn into gold. The stones he touched were straightway transmuted into the precious metal, and the ground he trod on became golden. So did, however, likewise the food he was going to eat,

* iv. 12; v. 12-17; vi. 1-9.

so that the ore stuck between his teeth. So did the curls on the head of his child, so that when his lips touched her face, they were pressing not against warm, responsive flesh, but against hardness and cold. The language of mankind has this truth engrained in its very texture. We call one whose mind is absorbed in money "a miser." And what is a miser? The word simply means a miserable man, a wretched person. This cannot be the way to the well of life; it is only one of the paths leading to vanity and vexation of spirit.

III

Such are the unsatisfactory answers to the great question raised in this book. But, now, what is the correct answer?

It is a rather surprising one. But it is repeated again and again all through the book; so that there can be no mistake about it. Here it is:

> "There is nothing better for a man than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour."

Here it is again in a somewhat fuller form:

> "Behold that which I have seen! It is good and comely for one to eat and to drink and to enjoy the good of all his labour that he taketh under the sun all the days of his life which God giveth him; for it is his portion.

> Every man also to whom God hath given riches and wealth, and hath given him power to eat thereof, and to take his portion and to rejoice in his labour ; this is the gift of God."

Again :

> " Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy and drink thy wine with a merry heart ; for God now accepteth thy work. Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife that thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity ; for this is thy portion in this life and in thy labour that thou takest under the sun."*

What do these sentences mean ? do they not recommend the very pursuit of pleasure which the Preacher has been denouncing ? At first sight they appear to do so ; but, when closely scrutinised, they are seen to mean something widely different.

The pursuit of pleasure, in the evil sense, is inconsistent with steady toil ; but, in every one of the definitions, just quoted, of the pleasure which the author is recommending, " labour " is mentioned as the price with which it is purchased. Idleness is denounced everywhere in the book and honest industry applauded :

> " Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."†

* ii. 24 ; v. 18-20 ; ix. 7-9. † ix. 10.

Again, the pursuit of pleasure, in the evil sense, is inconsistent with thoughts of God. The votary of pleasure does all he can to forget his Creator; but the pleasures here recommended are received as the gifts of God, and the sense of God's presence is to regulate the enjoyment of them :*

> "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know, that for all these things God shall bring thee into judgment."†

This does not mean that the judgment is something to terrify us from enjoyment, but that no pleasure is genuine the sweetness of which is not enhanced by the sense that God sees us partaking of His gifts.

Indeed, in this book, religion is spoken of as itself the prime pleasure of life and an ingredient in all true enjoyment; and in a well-known passage the young are exhorted to remember their Creator in the days of their youth, before old age with its frailties sets in. It is as if the Preacher said, The full sweetness of religion cannot be tasted unless it be enjoyed whilst the faculties of enjoyment are still in their prime.‡

* Always Elohim, the universal, never Jehovah, the national God.

† xi. 9.

‡ In Appendix B, p. 228, will be found an ampler statement of the philosophy of this book, in the shape of an exposition of the first verses of the last chapter, the aim being to show how to use such learning as an evangelistic weapon.

In short, the meaning of the writer is plain enough, if two distinctions be borne in mind. Of these the first is the difference between pleasure pursued as an end in itself and pleasure enjoyed as the natural outcome of honest and well directed industry. This writer teaches that God rules over every human life and appoints what is to go into every cup. Only wait patiently, and you will get your own share. It is not necessary to pursue pleasure: if you be only in the way, doing your duty, it will come to you of its own accord. There may be such a thing as the farmer sowing and never reaping; but this is quite exceptional. Be in your place and at your post, sowing the seed of life in its season, and the harvest of pleasure will grow in due time.

The other distinction is that between natural and artificial pleasure. The real pleasures of life are simple. What enjoyment, manufactured by art, is comparable to a sound sleep? Yet every labouring man enjoys this every four-and-twenty hours. With all his striving how little it is that anyone can obtain. He cannot eat more than one meal at a time; he cannot at the same time wear more than one suit of clothes; and nature is bountiful enough to supply as much as this to all. Why do men envy one another and trample on one another in their eagerness to attain the enjoyments of life? There is enough for all, if men were not so keen for

pleasure that, in their haste, they upset the vessel in which it is contained.

Such is the doctrine of this book and its answer to the question how to be happy. Happiness is not to be found by eagerly and selfishly pursuing it; but it comes simply and naturally to those who are doing their duty and walking in God's way.*

Between the vain attempts at the solution of the riddle of existence and the true solution, however, there come in elements of considerable extent, embodying criticism of life, not a little of which is so pungent that the author has by some been reckoned among the sceptics. But the presence of these exposures of the seamy side of things has the same artistic purpose as in *chiaroscuro* the massing of dark pigments for the purpose of throwing into relief the figures in the picture on which the light is intended to fall. The facility and felicity with which the author extricates himself from these dark

* The philosophical sects of Greece, Stoics and Epicureans, occupied themselves with the same problem, and there are not a few resemblances between their favourite ideas and illustrations and those of the Ecclesiast. On this account the latter has been supposed by some to have copied these thinkers. PLUMPTRE was among those who adopted this view, which deeply colours his exposition; but the late PROFESSOR A. B. DAVIDSON, in the article on Ecclesiastes in *Book by Book*, says: "Nothing could be more inept than to look upon Ecclesiastes as reflecting the ideas of Greek philosophy, whether Stoical or Epicurean. The coincidences of phraseology are merely literary, not technical. Nor can the terms Stoic or Epicurean be applied to him in their proper sense. . . . The work is a genuine product of the Hebrew Wisdom."

entanglements, in order to state again and again what is the message of his book, afford conclusive proof that he is no pessimist, but a consistent and victorious optimist.

IV

In this wisdom of the Ecclesiast there are tones which call to mind a far greater Preacher. Jesus also rebuked the eager striving and anxiety of men to find happiness. "Take no thought for to-morrow," He said; "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." If God feeds the ravens and adorns the lilies, how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith!

It is true that Christ taught sacrifice and self-denial; but this was never the whole of His message. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and His critics, contrasting Him in this respect unfavourably with the Baptist, called Him a gluttonous man and a winebibber. The first word of His preaching was "Blessed," and the name given by Himself to His doctrine as a whole was "the Glad Tidings." Christianity is not correctly defined as a life of suffering and self-denial in this world, by which a life of enjoyment is to be purchased in the world to come. Even in this world it affords a life of pleasure, pure, simple and natural. Godliness has the

promise of the life which now is as well as of that which is to come.

At a time when great movements are being set agoing, in the name of Christianity, for the uplifting of the condition of the people, and everybody who is anybody has in his head a scheme of social regeneration, it is not out of place to emphasise this truth. With movements for the better housing of the poor, the procuring of higher wages for the underpaid, the shortening of the hours of labour, and the brightening of the homes of the multitude by means of art and knowledge, every Christian ought to be in sympathy, and the authority of Christ can be appealed to on behalf of such efforts. But not in these things lies the secret of Jesus Christ. "The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost." It has never been by bread alone that men have lived the life which is life indeed. The secret of Jesus does not need to be discovered in the twentieth century: it has always been known. In the first century it was known to tens of thousands of slaves, who were made blessed by it, though still under the yoke. In last century it was known to Scottish weavers, Welsh quarrymen and English peasants, who, in spite of means far too straitened, had their homes brightened and their characters glorified by its influence. The deformed, the incurable, the agonised, the dying have in myriads

of cases in every age been made happy by it. In our own day, in the poorest streets of our cities, it makes the homes of true Christians to differ as much from the homes of the drunken and reckless as lilies do from thorns. It is not by the manipulation of their circumstances from the outside that the lapsed multitudes are to be regenerated. True happiness is a well springing up within the soul. It is a life hid with Christ in God.*

* Professor A. B. Davidson, in the article quoted above, suggests another way in which Ecclesiastes foreshadows Christ: "The Preacher prepares for Christianity by showing the need of it. He is a voice crying in the night. His cry may justly be called prophetic. The life and immortality brought to light in the Gospel would have changed his 'vanity of vanities' into an activity of gladness. When Christ said, 'God is spirit, and they that worship must worship Him in spirit,' He not only stated a necessity, He gave a definition. Religion is fellowship with God in spirit."

CHAPTER VII

RUTH

THE purpose of the human author of the Book of Ruth was probably to commemorate a beautiful episode in the history of the forefathers of King David and to show how piety perpetuates itself from generation to generation; for Ruth was the great-grandmother of David. The elaboration of the story would have been a congenial task for a member of the circle of literary men of consecrated genius that surrounded the throne of the psalmist king, busying itself especially with the poetical remains and ancient annals of the people of God and including such names as Asaph, Gad and Nathan; but whether any of these was the author it is now impossible to say; and the disposition of scholars at present is to float this, like every other Bible-book, as far down the stream as possible. There is really nothing to decide the date except general considerations, which one scholar can interpret in one way and another in another.

The divine Author, however, had remoter intentions; for Ruth was not an ancestress of David only,

but of Jesus Christ; and she is one of the three women honoured with places in the tables of His genealogy found in the New Testament. Yet she was originally a heathen. In the story of her separation from the pagan Moabites, her union with the godly Boaz, and her connection in this way with the Saviour of mankind it is now impossible not to recognise a symbol of the "mystery," so frequently referred to in the New Testament, that Jesus was to be the Saviour not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles, and an anticipation of the saying of Jesus: "Whosoever will do the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister and mother."

There is a more external but not uninteresting connection of this book with Christ in the fact that its principal scenes lie in the very fields of Bethlehem-Judah over which there sounded the song of the angels announcing His birth to the shepherds. It was here that Naomi lived with her husband, Elimelech, and her two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, before the famine broke out that drove them to Moab; and here Boaz likewise had his farm. Moab was not far distant. From these very fields of Bethlehem it is seen away to the East, bounding the horizon like an immense mountain-wall and overhanging the hill-country of Judah, though separated from it by the deep, mysterious gulf of the Dead Sea. It was somewhere on the hills of

Moab, or perhaps beside the dark and baleful shore of the Dead Sea itself, that the central incident of the book took place. That mountain-wall forms the extreme western limit of the highland country of Moab, which has always been a rich pastoral district. At certain periods of history it is found clasped in deadly wrestle with Israel; but at other times there was a certain amount of intercourse between the two nations, which traced their ancestry back to a common origin; and, indeed, Moab was a peaceful and comparatively civilised country. Thither, then, when hunted from the fields of Judah by the wolves of famine, Elimelech escaped with his family. But he did not long survive the change of residence. Famine he had escaped, but only to encounter death in another form. And a similar fate soon befell his two sons, who had married daughters of the foreign country in which they found themselves. Whether they were too little mindful of the distinction between the Lord's people and the heathen, or whether their wives are to be looked upon as having become Jewish proselytes,* we do not know. But the young men soon died, leaving no offspring; and the three bereaved and lonely women occupied the house in which there was now no breadwinner. No wonder

* Hardly, it is to be feared; because, when it is stated that Orpah went back to her gods, it seems to be implied that she had never renounced them.

Naomi's heart reverted to her native fields or that, "hearing that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread," she rose up and set out thither. Her two daughters-in-law accompanied her, thus breaking up entirely the Moabite home.

The book derives a peculiar interest from its place among the books of the Bible. In our English Bible it comes immediately after the Book of Judges —that narrative of a wild and lawless time, full of feuds and bloodshed, crime and violence. This reminds us that amidst the stormiest epochs of history there are spots of peace and sunshine; for the story is an idyll of perfect beauty and charm, though there is no reason to doubt that in its details, as well as its general outline, it is a reproduction of fact. It is the first book of Scripture bearing the name of a woman; and its broadest interest lies in its delineation of the relation of woman to religion.

I

Naomi conveys the impression of a woman well advanced in years, yet not old. She had, however, reached the stage when the traveller on the journey of life does not see many of her kindred in front, but has both to choose the way for herself and to set an example to those who follow.

It is clear that her life had been one of much vicissitude and uncommonly severe trial. It is

not on the rich but on the poor, or the comparatively poor, that the pinch of famine falls. It may, therefore, be inferred that, when the famine broke out, it found Elimelech and Naomi, although in possession of their ancestral inheritance, yet in circumstances of embarrassment. Then came the breaking-up of the home—a measure which would scarcely have been resorted to but when money and all other resources had failed. Then had Naomi to leave the farm in which she had hoped to pass her life and go away among strangers, who were not of her own kin or even of her own race, but foreigners and idolaters. Still, however, her family was intact; and love can conquer poverty and change. Then came the worst blow of all, when her husband was taken from her side. Still she had her two sons, grown to manhood, to lean upon and love; and the occupants of her heart were increased and her hopes borne far into the future, when the sons brought home wives that loved her. These hopes were, however, all crushed when, in the flower of their age, her sons were taken from her. No wonder, when she reappeared in Bethlehem, she was so changed in appearance with these griefs that her former acquaintance scarcely knew her and exclaimed, "Is this Naomi?" or that she cried out in the bitterness of her spirit, "Call me not Naomi (that is, 'My delight'), but call me Mara (or 'Bitter'); for the Almighty hath dealt very

bitterly with me : I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty ; why call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me ?"

The first thing that strikes an observer in Naomi's character is a certain largeness of humanity. When her dearest were taken away, she still loved what was left, facing the world bravely, with a mind open to receive whatever good the future might bring. Her heart was still capable of sending out new blossoms. There is no more beautiful verse in the whole Book of Ruth than the one near the end where, after the birth of the son of Boaz and Ruth, it is said, " And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it." The aged woman, after being scorched so long with the east-winds of adversity, was still capable of rejoicing in this young life and finding a warm place for it in her bosom.

Another proof of the same quality is the affection she secured from her two daughters-in-law. Very likely it was a great trial to her at first when, instead of two daughters of her own people, these two aliens, with their wild, unsanctified natures and their strange habits and customs, were brought home to her by her two sons. But she did not allow the trial to harden her against them. On the contrary, she set herself to win their love, trusting to time to make her own principles and character soften and

alter theirs. And she was successful. Though they appear to have been of the most opposite dispositions, they both loved her fervently, they lived under her roof after their husbands died, and, when she made up her mind to return to Bethlehem, they both made known a passionate determination to accompany her.

A third proof of the same quality is her appreciation of how hard it was for her daughters-in-law to leave home and kindred, the habits and enjoyments of their native land, and to renounce the natural career of women young enough to be married and most likely to secure a comfortable establishment among their own people. She seems to have felt as if they might justly be angry at her, because it was by her sons that they had been left widows: "It grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of the Lord hath gone forth against me." And afterwards she was most anxious to secure for Ruth, who had so generously clung to her, the comforts of a union with Boaz. It was she who devised the plan by which this was brought about, her feelings being expressed in the large-hearted words: "My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?"

There is no more important quality for those who stand in relations to young women similar to those occupied to Ruth by Naomi. Piety is not enough. It has to be founded upon a largeness of humanity

which is antecedent to piety. As no man will influence young men who is not himself manly, so no woman will do much good among younger women who does not possess a large heart. If any woman can be justly called Mara—if she is bitter, sour, censorious, conventional, as, alas, religious women sometimes are—she cannot represent religion advantageously among her own sex. It is the large-natured woman, with an overflow of love and the gift of being beloved, able to appreciate the exuberance of girls' natures and to understand how difficult it is for them to renounce the world, who will be a Naomi to Ruths and Orpahs. There must even be a certain judicious negligence, a power of not seeing faults or seeing them through the fingers. Every little fault or peccadillo is not to be magnified into a sin; and, if those who are growing old wish to retain their influence with the young, they must not forget that they were once young themselves, fond of mirth and gaiety, laughing and loving, speculating and defying conventionality.

Yet Naomi cannot be quoted as an advocate for worldliness and unrestrained human nature. With all her generous large-heartedness, she was a woman of thorough religious principle. Through those ten weary years, in the tents of Kedar, she cherished unimpaired her devotion to the Holy Land of her fathers and the altar of her God, and she took the first opportunity of returning. Her sons may have

forgotten the law of Moses, when they married heathen wives; but she converted one of her daughters-in-law and profoundly impressed the other. She set distinctly before her daughters-in-law the difficulties of the choice they must make in becoming members of the people of Israel. So vivid were the pictures she drew of the hardships of following her and the advantages of staying in Moab that it might be inferred she did not really wish them to go with her. But this would be as mistaken as to suppose that Jesus, when, in images of unsurpassed severity, He described the hardships of discipleship, was not desirous that the children of men should follow Him. Naomi wanted, as Jesus wants always, a decision of principle and not of mere impressions—a decision that would last and not be succeeded by regret and backsliding. Yet she was yearning with all her heart to take both daughters-in-law away from the unsanctified land with its impure associations.

It is this union of large humanity with religious decision which makes Naomi a typical figure. Some of those standing in similar relations to young women are thoroughly worldly in spirit, having only a thin veneer of religion; and the result is that the young, whose eyes are keen in detecting falsehood, think religion to be a mere pretence. Others are religious enough, but are so suspicious and censorious towards every exhibition of youthful spirits or human

passion that those under their influence learn to dread and to hate all religion. Others still have a sincere religious interest and yet are aware that the young must be indulged, but are quite unable to reconcile these opposite points of view, and so, oscillating feebly between them, neutralise by the one half of their conduct what they aim at with the other. Rare is the gift of being thoroughly human, indulgent to faults, patient of shortcomings, sympathetic with youthful exuberance, and yet using all this part of one's nature and conduct as a means of making the young love religion, admire Christian character, and finally themselves decide for Christ.

II

Both the daughters-in-law loved Naomi; both had powerfully experienced her influence; both started together to accompany her to the land of Judah; both lifted up their voice and wept, vowing they would never leave her, when she urged them to return home. Yet Orpah went back after all.

It is not unlikely that Orpah may all along have been the more ardent and demonstrative of the two, in the adoption of her new opinions and the announcement of her resolution to change her country and her god, till the moment of decision arrived. She was probably also quite sincere in it all. She never knew how weak her convictions were,

how shallow the change that had passed over her, how strong were the natural instincts of her being, or how irresistible the habits of the old life, till she was put to the test through her feelings and sentiments having to be converted into action.

Orpah is the representative of a large class—of those who have religious impressions without religious principles. They have more or less connection with religion; they have desires to do well and none to do ill; they are related to religious persons and love them; and yet, when an hour of trial comes, making resolution and action necessary, they discover that their heart is in the world; and, giving up God and His people and a holy life, they follow their natural instincts and the way of the majority.

It is a touch of exquisite truthfulness that Orpah "kissed" Naomi, while Ruth "clave" to her. Persons of the Orpah-type are lavish of the outward signs of affection, but they are incapable of the actions which should accompany these demonstrations. They are not consciously insincere. Only they are self-indulgent; and it is easy to give a kiss, which costs nothing, instead of a kind act, which would cost something, or to produce a rush of tears instead of facing a hard duty. In one of George Eliot's books there is an invalid lady lying in bed with her daughter. Turning suddenly worse, she calls to the sleeper beside her to rise and bring her

medicine from the mantelpiece. But the dainty girl hates to move about in the dark and to place her delicate feet on the cold hearthstone. So she lies still, pretending to be asleep; and the poor invalid has to fetch her medicine herself. In the morning the daughter awakes penitent and nearly smothers her mother with kisses.

It is more than likely that Orpah was the favourite with everybody. There is in such creatures a characterless capacity for both feeling and expressing affection which easily takes others in. But they take a friendship up the one day and set it down the next. For them the newcomer is always the most welcome. They love ardently, but forget easily. The one damning thing, however, about such a character is that, with all its intensity of feeling, it cannot face hardship and self-denial for the sake of others or of principle.

There is something extremely deceptive about such characters; and there must be few who cannot recollect the bitter discovery that it is possible to be soft as a peach outside but hard inside as a peach-stone. Such a disposition frequently deceives even those who possess it; because, being conscious of strong feelings and elevated sentiments, they mistake these for strength of character and high principle. This fatal error is nursed by not a little of the literature of the time. The ideal of strength and originality set forth in many of the books most read

by young girls is merely hysterical excitability; and it is not surprising that those who feed their minds on such materials, being conscious of unmeasured feelings and doing an occasional act of romantic generosity, have no idea how incapable they themselves are of following steadily an original course or sticking to a difficult resolution. Many a one who can weep floods of tears over a pathetic scene in a work of fiction never visits a poor person or even speaks to a person of a lower class.

It would be unfaithful to the subject not to notice what was the deciding temptation with Orpah and the point on which Naomi, with her knowledge of Orpah's history and character, laid the principal stress. It was the chance of marriage. This is woman's natural career. The instincts which make it so are not only among the strongest but among the most sacred in human nature; and, when they are guided by the light of religious principle, they lead to the formation of the best thing in the world—the nursery of all that is good, pure and lovely upon earth—the godly home. These natural affections are a light from heaven; yet they may be a light that leads astray. Many are the shipwrecks of fair Christian profession that have been made on this rock, women throwing away on a love or a union that must degrade them the better thoughts and resolutions of their youth. On the other hand, there are few heroisms recorded

in the books of God more pathetic than the silent quenching of feelings and the unmarked extinction of natural hopes in minds that will not purchase even so precious a thing as love at the expense of conscience and self-respect.

It is with the profoundest pity, if also with a touch of resentment and contempt, that we see Orpah returning "unto her people and unto her gods." The more we know of Moab, as it then was, the deeper will be this sentiment; for her return meant the voluntary forsaking of the best she had ever known and the abandonment of the true hope in her future. It meant returning to dwell among influences worldly, heathenish, impure. It meant going back to participation in the licentious orgies of Baal-Peor. There would come a time when to her the best she had known would be a painful memory only—a thorn in the flesh—or, worse still, a thing altogether forgotten, if she were so sunk in degradation that she could forget. It is pitiable to see a human soul voluntarily going into an environment where it must harden and be separated more and more widely from all that is good. And there will come at last the final separation, wide as the poles of the universe—the separation of death, judgment and eternity.

III

The figure of Ruth is one of the most beautiful in the whole gallery of female portraiture; and it is no wonder that art has often chosen it as a subject for the brush or the chisel. To put it into words is not easy, yet the details stand out with tempting clearness—her love for her aged mother-in-law, so tender and steadfast, showing itself, unlike Orpah's, less by outward demonstration than by constant acts of kindness, so that not only did Naomi privately recognise it, but it became so notorious that Boaz had, as he acknowledged, heard all that she had done to her mother-in-law; her receptive, yet independent and consistent mind, which, becoming aware of the contrast between the habits of the Moabites and the life of Naomi, allowed itself to be transformed by contact with the good angel sent to her by Providence, till the wild, unsanctified habits of her former self disappeared; the diligence and cheerfulness she exhibited in the poor home at Bethlehem; the delicacy with which, armed only with the modesty of her own nature, she trod undefiled, in obedience to the voice of duty, along the hazardous path of an old and indelicate custom; and the success which everywhere attended her—the universal favour and regard she excited in her neighbours; her union with a man of such goodness and greatness as Boaz; the birth of her son and her

placing the infant in the glad arms of Naomi; the royal seed which sprang from her; above all, her crowning distinction as the ancestress of Jesus. It is all a gladdening illustration of the great words, "Them that honour Me, I will honour."

But the central interest of her story is the choice made by her at the parting of the ways, when Orpah went back and she went forward. The Book of Ruth may be called the Book of Decision; and it rises without effort into the purest poetry, when it gives her resolution in the matchless words:

> Entreat me not to leave thee,
> And to return from following after thee:
> For whither thou goest, I will go;
> And where thou lodgest, I will lodge:
> Thy people shall be my people,
> And thy God my God:
> Where thou diest will I die,
> And there will I be buried:
> The Lord do so to me, and more also,
> If aught but death part thee and me.

Her choice may have begun with attachment to her mother-in-law, by the fragrance of whose character her moral sense had been captivated; it was expanded into a choice of the people of God also, when she learned to know the difference between them and the inhabitants of her native land; it deepened into a choice of God as her God, and this was the interior link which held fast at the critical moment. It determined the place of her abode, because, where Naomi was, was home to her. It

was an eternal choice: naught but death could separate her from Naomi; and, whether then it was known to her or not, even death was not to separate her from Naomi and Naomi's God.

It has been made a reproach to Christianity that the virtues it cultivates are the feminine ones, to the disparagement of the masculine virtues. But what are the masculine virtues? In the scheme of Aristotle, to which Nietzsche wished to carry the world back, the two prime virtues were magnanimity and magnificence. Magnanimity is the self-consciousness of one who knows his own value and goes his own way without regard for what the multitude think of him; and magnificence is the conduct of one who incurs expenditure for the public good, not asking what it will cost but only how to make it worthy of the object to which it is devoted. Certainly these are manly virtues, and Aristotle thought of them only as the possession of rare and fortunate individuals. But Christianity has made even these the privileges of the woman no less than the man, and it has made them accessible to everyone willing to obey the call of the Gospel. Christ calls every disciple to a double choice; for He calls everyone both out of the world and into the Kingdom of God. To forsake the world, however, involves magnanimity in the Aristotelian sense; for a Christian must be sure enough of his own convictions to abandon his former habits and

society and, if need be, stand alone against the world. And magnificence, in the Aristotelian sense, is no less involved in the other half of the choice—entering into the Kingdom of God—because, in making that Kingdom come and causing the will of God to be done on earth as it is in heaven, every Christian is involved in tasks of world-wide extent, requiring originality, devotion, expenditure; and, though poor, he may be making many rich.

There are some books of the Old Testament redolent of the bondage and imprisonment to which woman is subject in the East; but in this open-air book how free is the atmosphere and how natural the development of character! It is a prophecy of the great New Testament principle, that in Christ there is neither male nor female; as well as of those developments, still in progress, by which woman is securing her due place in the home, the State and the Church; while, at the same time, woman is reminded that the charter of her emancipation is the personal and ardent choice of that good part which shall not be taken away from her.

CHAPTER VIII

JOB

I

In not a few respects Job is the most remarkable book either in the Bible or out of it. Looked at merely as an effort of genius, apart altogether from inspiration, it is allowed by the best judges to have no equal in the profundity of its ideas, the sublimity of its imagery, or the abundance and variety of the materials which it has built up into a perfect whole. "It will one day perhaps," says a secular writer, "when it is allowed to stand on its own merit, be seen towering up alone, far away above all the poetry of the world."

Its unknown author must have been a traveller in many countries, especially in Arabia and Egypt; he was a close observer of nature in all her aspects and a still profounder student of human nature. He possessed all the knowledge of his time and had accumulated a vast store of observation from the world. The whole of this experience is poured into his poem; but so great is his artistic skill that the theme is nowhere overloaded but preserved in

perfect simplicity and clearness from first to last.

There is every variety of poetry in the book—pathos of the most touching order, as in the dirge on human mortality in chapter xiv.; beauty the most exquisite, as in chapters xxix. and xxx., in which the hero's prosperity and adversity are depicted side by side; and sublimity, only equalled by the loftiest passages in Isaiah, in the descriptions of God's works, with which the latter part of the book abounds. Every here and there the reader comes upon a long connected passage, which could be lifted out of its place and enjoyed as a poem by itself; but it is with the book as a whole that we must at present deal.

II

The first Psalm holds the place it does because it was intended to be an introduction to the whole Psalter; indeed, it lays the foundation on which the entire religion of the Old Testament rests. It says:

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord,
And in His law doth he meditate day and night.
And he shall be like a tree planted by the streams of water,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.
The wicked are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.

That is to say, prosperity shall be the lot of the righteous, but misfortune shall dog the steps of the wicked.

Now, this is a great truth. It is a truth for nations, for families and for individuals. Morality and godliness are the only sure foundations of success, whilst wickedness, however imposingly it may spread itself out, will ultimately bring those who practise it to ruin. This is, however, a law to which life supplies many exceptions. The good are sometimes poor, unfortunate and, in all outward respects, miserable; and—what is still more perplexing—the wicked sometimes flourish in spite of their wickedness or even, it would sometimes appear, because of it. The honest man may be seen battling all his life with a sea of trouble and going down at last out of sight, like a strong swimmer in his agony, whilst the successful rogue rides on the crest of the wave in a sunny sea.

It is very long since this riddle of existence began to perplex thoughtful minds. In spite of the unqualified statements of Psalm i., as well as of many which follow in the Psalter, there are other Psalms which acknowledge the mystery. One of the very foremost of the psalmists tells how trying

to himself this problem had been, driving him to the verge of atheism :

> But as for me, my feet were almost gone ;
> My steps had wellnigh slipped.
> For I was envious at the arrogant,
> When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

On the contrary, he was sensible of deriving no visible advantage from his piety, but rather the reverse :

> Surely in vain have I cleansed my heart,
> And washed my hands in innocency ;
> For all the day long have I been plagued,
> And chastened every morning.

Not only had this been his own experience, but he was aware that the godly in the land were uttering the same complaint :

> Therefore His people return hither :
> And waters of a full cup are wrung out by them.
> And they say, How does God know ?
> And is there knowledge in the Most High ?*

It did not please God at once to reveal the solution of the mystery. On the contrary, He allowed it long to try His people, and the answer was given only bit by bit. At first they endeavoured to satisfy themselves and to quell their doubt with the solution, that the prosperity of the wicked was only temporary : they were elevated to a giddy eminence, but only that their fall might be the more sudden

* Psalm lxxiii.

and terrible. In human life there have always been plenty of facts to justify such a view; but it was not sufficient; for it came to be seen that the wicked sometimes went on prospering to the end. Then another solution was tried: at all events, it was suggested, their death is terrible: although they may prosper in life, revenge is taken on them in the terror with which they are hurried away from their ill-gotten possessions and confronted with the terrific spectacle of eternity. In support of this view, also, facts could be adduced in plenty; but it was not enough; because it was found that often the wicked passed away without their self-complacency being interrupted: they had "no bands in their death." So the solution had to be moved on a step further, and another explanation was tried: calamity falls on the children of the wicked: though they may die themselves in peace, their hoarded wealth melts away in the hands of their heirs, and their families perish in dishonour. Of this also life affords many illustrations. Yet the problem is larger than the area which any or all of these explanations can cover. We still require to know why the righteous suffer and the wicked flourish. And this is the problem to which the whole of the Book of Job is devoted.

III

The scene of the book is placed in the land of Uz, a country to the east of Palestine, not far from the region out of which Abraham originally came; and Job probably lived as far back as the Father of the Faithful. In the grey twilight of the world and in the dim borderland beyond the confines of civilisation this drama was enacted.

Job was a man perfect and upright, one who feared God and eschewed evil. As he was a good man, God had correspondingly prospered him; for he had a wife, seven sons and three daughters, and his flocks and herds were on an immense scale, like those of a primeval chief or sheikh. Thus his condition was a striking exemplification of the law laid down in Psalm i.: goodness and prosperity were united in his life.

All this having been told in the first few verses of the book, the scene is changed to a totally different portion of the universe. Heaven is opened, and Jehovah revealed, surrounded by "the sons of God"—a name for the angels. Among these frequenters of the heavenly court there is one whom it is surprising to see there—no other than that fallen spirit whose diabolical work it is first to tempt and then to accuse and deride the children of men. God, who has control over even his movements,

demands of him where he has been, and the reply is, that he has been visiting the earth and walking up and down in it. God then asks him if, in the course of his peregrinations, he has taken notice of His servant Job, whose goodness was an honour to heaven and could not but be a pain to the enemy of all good. Satan replies that he knows the man, but follows up this confession with the sneer, "Does Job serve God for nought?" The man was only good, he hinted, because he was prosperous; but, if God would withdraw this payment for virtue, the virtue itself would soon disappear, and Job would curse God to His face. Incensed at this insinuation, God gives the accuser permission to make the trial. As the angel of destruction, he may destroy all Job's earthly possessions, and then it will be seen whether, when he becomes a poor man, Job will be an impious one.

No sooner said than done! Satan went forth at once to deliver the blow which he had received permission to inflict. As the prince of the power of the air he summoned to his aid the lightning and the storm, and, at one stroke, stripped Job of his children and all his earthly possessions. The event, however, proved how futile had been his boast; for, instead of falling into impiety and cursing God, Job shone forth with fresh lustre as a humble worshipper of the Most High, his only comment on his losses being: "Naked came I out of my

mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." "In all this Job sinned not nor charged God with foolishness."

The foiled tempter reappears in heaven, and God reproaches him with his failure. But Satan returns to the charge, sneering as before at the idea that virtue is disinterested. He has to confess that he has failed, but insinuates that Job is too selfish to be moved even by the sufferings of his own flesh and blood; let him, however, suffer in his own person, and he will curse God to His face. Permission is given to try this new temptation; and Satan goes forth from the heavenly court to put it into execution. The most terrible bodily disease known to antiquity—that of elephantiasis—a form of leprosy—forthwith fell on Job, torturing him with ceaseless pain and making him loathsome both in his own eyes and in the eyes of others. At this new trial his wife's faith immediately yielded, and she gave to her husband the advice to curse God and die. But the faith of Job never flinched: "Thou speakest," was his reply, to the wife of his bosom, "as one of the foolish women speaketh. What! shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not also receive evil?" "In all this did not Job sin with his lips."

Thus was Satan foiled a second time, and the

thesis which he had maintained in heaven, that human goodness is never disinterested, had been victoriously disproved.

IV

These events, which are narrated in the first two chapters, are only the introduction to the real body of the book—the conflict in Job's mind with religious scepticism, caused by the apparent injustice of his calamities. This is represented as having been aroused in him in a peculiar way. Three of his friends, living in three neighbouring countries, having heard of his calamities and communicating with one another on the subject, resolve to go in a body to the afflicted man and to be his comforters. They are grave and venerable figures—Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite. On their arrival they were very welcome to Job, who was in sore need of comfort. Accordingly they sat down and wept with him in silence; and he who, in facing the opposition of his wife, was able to preserve the calm of a stoic, was so melted with the exhibition of sympathy on the part of his three friends that the floodgates of his grief flew open, and he poured into their ears all the bitterness of his heart. What could be more natural? Sympathy overcomes reserve. Job's heart was breaking, and the arrival of his friends gave it vent.

It soon appeared, however, that his confidence in the extent of their sympathy was misplaced. They had arranged well with one another, before arriving in Uz, how they were to deal with their friend. They were pious men, but narrow and conventional in their views of God, and they had never themselves gone through such experiences as would have made them capable of understanding his. Holding the accepted creed, that God always rewards the righteous with prosperity and punishes the wicked with calamity, they had come resolved to apply this standard to Job's case. As calamity is the punishment of sin, his extraordinary calamities must, they concluded, be the punishment of extraordinary sins of which he had been guilty; and they thought it the duty of true friendship to induce him to confess his sin and urge him to repent; for this was the only road by which the prosperity which he had lost could be regained. Such was the purpose of their visit. They are the representatives of a hard and narrow orthodoxy, which cannot conceive the possibility of its creed being too limited to cover everything in heaven and earth.

Job's own creed was the same as theirs; but he had not noticed how it had been contradicted by his experience, until the contradiction was pressed home on his attention by his friends. Then came the real temptation of the pious man—a temptation

far more acute than those inflicted on him by Satan or that due to the tergiversation of his wife. Pressed by his orthodox friends, who all the time believed themselves to be acting on behalf of God and of the truth, and even on behalf of Job himself, he saw how utterly his creed was demolished by facts. As, however, to give up one's belief about God always appears, at first sight, the same thing as giving up God Himself, Job felt the ground of all religion slipping from beneath his feet, and himself being precipitated into the abyss of atheism.

This discussion with his three friends occupies the main body of the book—chapters iv. to xxxi. Each of the friends delivers a speech, and Job answers each of them in turn. This occupies eleven chapters. Then the same thing happens over again, each of the friends speaking a second time and Job answering them. This occupies other seven chapters. Then, for the third time, Eliphaz and Bildad speak, and Job answers them, refuting them so completely that Zophar* does not venture to come forward a

* The reason given in the text would account for the disappearance of Zophar from the discussion, and it might account likewise for the brevity of Bildad's contribution. But many have surmised that the third cycle of debate must, in the distribution of the materials among the four speakers, have approached to the symmetry of the first two cycles. They have, therefore, endeavoured to restore to Bildad and Zophar the passages originally belonging to them; and the reader may test his own ingenuity by conjecturing which these are. It is undeniable that in the speech, or rather speeches, put into the mouth of Job between chapters xxvi. and

third time; and then Job, having routed his opponents, pursues for a chapter of two the plane of his own reflections. This occupies ten chapters. Thus there are three cycles of discussion, in which Job and the friends engage one another.

The statements of the friends are simple and straightforward and do not vary from one another very much, except that, as the discussion proceeds, their tone becomes more and more severe and uncompromising. In the first cycle they state their creed in general terms and apply it to Job's case, with a certain amount, however, of consideration. If Job has been a sinner, they hint, he is only like his neighbours, for all are sinners; and with great unction they exhort him to repent, assuring him, in that case, of the return of his prosperity:

If thou set thine heart aright,
And stretch out thine hands toward Him;
If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away,
And let not unrighteousness dwell in thy tents;
Surely then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot;
Yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear:
For thou shalt forget thy misery;
Thou shalt remember it as waters that are passed away:
And thy life shall be clearer than the noonday;
Though there be darkness, it shall be as the morning.
And thou shalt be secure, because there is hope;
Yea, thou shalt search about thee and shalt take thy rest in safety.
Also thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.*

xxxi., the thread of connection is not easy to follow, especially in the first half, where the lost speeches must be sought, if they are lost; whereas Job rises grandly into his own vein in the second half.

* xi. 13-19.

In the second cycle, irritated with Job's resistance, they become much more severe and personal; and in the third, casting away all moderation, they tell Job plainly, that they do not believe in his professions of innocence, but are certain he must be hiding in his heart the very worst of crimes. Of this the severity and variety of his calamities afford sufficient proof; for in the eyes of these judges every single calamity is the punishment for a specific sin.

Job's speeches are far more interesting than those of the friends and contain a far greater variety of matter. The changing phases of his mental condition, as these are revealed in his words, form the real interest of the book. (The question all through is, whether Job is going to fall away from faith in God or not.) The attitude of his friends, when he discovered what it was, gave him a great shock. He had welcomed them, when they came, and expected comfort from their sympathy; but they turned out to be enemies rather than friends; and it was not long before he had to tell them that they were "miserable comforters." The new pain occasioned by their lack of sympathy very naturally revived all his own sufferings; and in his speeches he gives ever and anon heartrending accounts of his condition, breaking into long descriptions of his bereavements and woes. All God's waves and billows are passing over him. There is something awful and even unearthly in the inte ty of his grief. It could

scarcely be believed that the heart of man could contain such an ocean of sorrow.* The worst, however, was the contradiction of his creed contained in his experiences. As the mere exertion of utterance made him conscious of the situation in all its length and breadth, he felt God to be passing utterly beyond his reach. This was sorrow's crown of sorrow.

Job was hemmed in by three alternatives. First, his friends accused him of heinous sin and urged him to confess it. If he could have felt this to be true, it would have been a relief to him; for it would have justified God's dealing with him. Secondly, he might have given up his creed, acknowledging it to be untrue or inadequate. But all who have ever been in a similar case know how difficult this is, the breaking-down of an old and dearly loved faith being like the cutting-off of a right hand. Thirdly, there was but one more alternative, and this was to rebel against God altogether or give up even believing in Him. Against these three barriers we see the mind of Job dashing itself like an angry sea, seeking outlet. This is what is revealed in these chapters, and it is a tragic sight—a godly man reeling on the brink of atheism.

* The late Canon Mozley, in his essay on the Book of Job, in *Essays Historical and Theological*, compares the exclamations of Io against the injustices of Jove in the *Prometheus Vinctus* of Æschylus, and he has a characteristic passage on the majesty yet clamorousness of the sense of justice in the human breast.

Which of the three barriers is going to give way? One of them must yield; no mind could long exist in the state in which Job's was. Could he, in the first place, confess his sin, as his friends demanded? Again and again he examined his life, but always arrived at the same conclusion—that there had been no observable lapse and no concealed crime, as they alleged. This he repeats again and again, and at last takes up his conclusive stand upon it:

> God forbid that I should justify you:
> Till I die I will not put away my integrity from me.
> My righteousness I hold fast, and will not let it go:
> My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live.*

In the second place, could he curse God as a cruel oppressor or give up belief in His existence and government altogether? The reader trembles to observe how near his mind was frequently driven to this extremity. He uses language about God's injustice in afflicting that all but oversteps the bounds of blasphemy. Yet even at the worst, it becomes evident, he cannot let God go. Nearly every speech closes with a passionate prayer—a cry to God to appear and vindicate his innocence. He is like a child in a tumult of passion at the father who has chastised him, crying out against him and striking out at him; and yet, with it all, he loves his father and will at last, when the storm is spent, weep out his heart on his father's breast.

* xxvii. 5.

These two barriers thus failing to give way, the third must yield. The traditional view of God—the creed which maintained that happiness invariably waited upon righteousness and misfortune followed sin—had to crumble down like an embankment before the irresistible force of a flood. More and more clearly, as the discussion went on, did Job recognise this. He lifted his eyes from his own grief to the general sorrow of the world, and, as his vision cleared from the mists of prejudice, he saw evidence everywhere that there must be other reasons for the distribution of prosperity and adversity than he had hitherto recognised. The best men were often oppressed and miserable, the worst often prosperous and happy. Thus were the bottles of the old faith rent by the fermenting wine of new experience, and the first step taken towards a new and truer conception of God. The Book of Job is the record of the birth of a new faith, Job's sorrows being the birth-pangs.

V

Such is the conclusion reached by Job. But it would be a mistake to represent his new belief as an attainment clearly made out. On the contrary, it was as yet no more than a dim and hesitating conjecture. He was not even sure whether it might not be a profane and deadly heresy, as it was certainly

considered by his friends; and he could only end with a passionate cry to God to appear and to explain the mystery.

Instead, however, of God immediately appearing in answer to his appeal, another human disputant at this stage steps on the scene. This is Elihu, a fourth friend of Job's, not mentioned before, but who has been standing by, listening to the discussion. He is a young man, and for this reason has not dared to speak earlier. But he sees clearly that his elders have failed, and yet he is dissatisfied with Job, who has triumphed over them. At length he can contain himself no longer; for, he believes, he has a light to shed upon the subject. True, he has not the wisdom of age; but

> It is not the great that are wise,
> Nor the aged that understand judgment;*

it is the inspiration of the Almighty that gives understanding, and this, he believes, he possesses.

Very various estimates have been formed of the contribution of Elihu, which extends over no fewer than six chapters. By many it has been pronounced to be an interpolation, supplied by a later and inferior hand. It is, however, quite up to the level of the rest of the book; and, as nature does not easily produce two authors capable of rising to the same mark, there is reason for thinking it part of

* xxxii. 9.

the original. The interpolation-theory is an easy method which the learned have of getting over difficulties. Others, while acknowledging the speeches of Elihu to be original, attach to them little importance as contributions to the discussion, or even take them to be illustrations of the rash confidence with which the young will believe themselves capable of solving difficulties with which their elders have been baffled. This is, however, a frivolous opinion; because some of the very finest things in the book come from the mouth of Elihu.

The true way to look at Elihu's speeches is to regard them as a final human effort to cast light on the dark mystery, and thereby to enhance the value of the solution by the divine Interpreter about to be delivered. Two points especially may be recognised as contributions made by the newcomer to the discussion. First, he brings out the distinction between sin and sins. Special calamities may not be traceable to certain sins and yet they may all have their root in sin. This is a valuable distinction. Secondly, he draws attention to the difference between calamity as chastisement and calamity as punishment; between these two there is all the difference that there is between the action of a judge and that of a father; and this also was a valuable distinction.*

* For the speeches of Elihu, I confess, I have had a partiality ever since I found out for myself, long ago, the great hymn embedded

At last, however, God Himself appears in answer to Job's many entreaties, and the closing chapters give His deliverance on the controversy. These are by far the most sublime portions of the book; and the divine decision is in Job's favour. Job is rebuked, indeed, for the wildness of his language, and the Almighty asserts His own right to shroud many of the reasons for His conduct in darkness; but He ends by sharply reproving the friends, who, though ostensibly speaking in His defence, had not spoken of Him the thing that was right, as Job had done; and to Job He accords the beautiful triumph of interceding with Him, that the sin of his unsympathetic friends may be forgiven.

The sequel to the whole is, that Job's original prosperity is restored. Calamity, having done its work, did not need to be continued any longer. Job gets the same number of sons and daughters as formerly, and becomes the owner of twice as many sheep and cattle as he possessed before his misfortunes; and he lives a hundred-and-forty years to enjoy his prosperity.

in them on the Awakening of the Life of God in the Soul. So important is this that I have given, in Appendix C, p. 241, a full exposition of the passage, xxxiii. 14-30. The strophic construction of these verses will not be found in any of the commentaries—not even in the latest, the able work of Professor Strahan. The editor of this series has come nearest to the discovery; but, I venture to think, I have been before even him in elucidating the real nature of the third strophe.

This proves that they are quite mistaken who represent the creed of Job's friends as altogether false, and Job's new creed as a total denial of the old. The old creed was narrow and inadequate, but not false, and the progress made by Job was like most really valuable movements in the sphere of belief, not so much a revolution as a development—a rise from a partial to a complete view of the truth. It is only, indeed, relatively that his newly won creed can be spoken of as complete. Perhaps what is felt most keenly at the close of the book is, that, after all, the question is not solved. It is, however, something surely that the heavy and deadly growths cumbering the ground are torn ruthlessly away, and that the fair form of the flower of truth has space and light to grow.

It took centuries to grow ; and it is interesting to note from which directions the growing truth came. Perhaps the words of the Almighty in Job, when at last He utters Himself, are disappointing. They do not supply the truth required by the occasion in any clear or simple formula. But the important point was that God spoke at all. Job had felt deserted; but, now that the living God had announced Himself, and Job was sure of Him, he could say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him." This was the form in which others after him obtained assurance. God communicated Himself to them, person to person. This was a posses-

sion superior to all other forms of prosperity; and, as long as it remained theirs, no earthly losses could impoverish them. They love God for His own sake; religion has its reason in itself; and it can survive as an undying consolation in the midst of bereavements and calamities.

Out of this was developed the belief in immortality; because a union with God so close as this cannot be dissolved. It has generally been supposed that Job himself reached this inference, especially in the great passage which, in the familiar version, runs: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He will stand at the latter day upon the earth; and, though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me";* but this has been such a battlefield for interpreters, and the resultant rendering is so dubious, that it is difficult to know how much importance to attach to it. In the chapter on the Psalms it has been seen how the development went on, until in subsequent times not only the immortality of the soul but, in Daniel, even the resurrection of the body would appear to have been reached. Even outside the circle of inspiration the hope of another life had spread so far that Cicero declares it to have been in his day universal. Yet, there is deep truth in the

* xix. 25-27.

apostolic statement, that it was Jesus who brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel; for it was only the word of one who had been Himself an inhabitant of the other world which could give final assurance to the doubting hearts of men, and it is because He was raised from the dead that those who believe in Him are sure of being raised also. When immortality and resurrection are assured, the puzzle of evil, with which Job and the saints of the Old Testament were almost strangled, relaxes its grip; because in a future life there will be ample space for both the punishment of the wicked and the rewarding of the righteous.

The Old Testament, however, does not close without an indication of a solution, in some ways even deeper, of the problem of evil. In the latter half of Isaiah, and especially in chapter liii., a servant of the Lord appears who is a sufferer to an extreme degree, but is so not for Himself but for others. He is abused and despised even unto death and beyond it; but out of His sacrifice there come immeasurable blessings to many; and from the height of the after-life He sees of the travail of His soul and is satisfied. This is the heroic solution of the problem; and it reappears in the New Testament. Like Job, Jesus of Nazareth was an example of a righteous man, not prosperous but exposed to the uttermost misfortune and woe. As Job's calamities were an offence to his friends, so was Christ crucified

to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness. Yet He was made perfect through suffering, and, because He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, He now sits on the throne where all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth ; and His shining example is daily teaching thousands that the one pathway to glory, honour and immortality is that of cross-bearing and self-denial.

It cannot, however, be ignored—though it often is by writers on the Book of Job—that one of the chief effects of this book was the development of belief in a world of evil spirits, of which Satan is the head. At the beginning of the book Satan is an equivocal figure, half-angel and half-devil. But the calamities against which the hero protests, as coming from the hand of God, are really the handiwork of this sinister being ; and it is when his hand is lifted that the fortunes of Job rebound to more than their initial luxuriance. After growing in the Old Testament and being very conspicuous in the period between the Old Testament and the New, this doctrine reappears in the New Testament, being shared by the apostles and even by Jesus Himself. It has become usual to explain it away as part of a contemporary vocabulary of ideas without which neither Jesus nor the apostles could either have thought themselves or have been understood by others. But it is questionable if the New Testa-

ment can be delivered on such terms from responsibility. It is a doctrine which is capable of abuse, and which has been abused to the discredit of the Church. Yet there are temptations which come with such sudden and overmastering violence as to suggest an unseen tempter of consummate skill, and the world is never without embodiments of evil which suggest the machinations of a prince of evil. Least of all are these absent from the advanced age in which we live, when war has burst forth among the most civilised nations and is using for purposes of devastation and destruction the skill and instrumentalities of science in its very latest developments. Goethe mentions that in his day there were some who showed their cleverness by denying the existence of a devil, and some of them, he adds, exhibited no other sign of cleverness.* Kant, with his strong ethical sense, believed in a radical evil. From the country of these thinkers have come most of the attempts to turn into ridicule the existence of a Satan; but from the same quarter have come the experiences which have put to shame the rosy views of human nature which many were beginning to entertain. The atrocities perpetrated against Armenia and those, too like them, attending the

* In *Faust* extensive use is made of the dramatic machinery of the Book of Job, and in the person of Mephistopheles a modern interpretation is supplied of the character and office of Satan. *Cf.* Masson's *The Three Devils—Luther's, Milton's and Goethe's*, being vol. ii. of *Essays Biographical and Critical.*

invasion of Belgium; the sinking of non-combatants on merchant ships and the bombing of open towns; the torpedoing of hospital-ships and the inhuman treatment of prisoners of war; the belief that nations are not subject, like individuals, to the morality of Christ, and that war is a temporary suspension of the Decalogue—the memory of such things has been carrying back the mind of the world to belief in both original sin and Satanic activity in human affairs. Yet the Book of Job will always remain among the principal encouragements to believe that there is no evil power which is not under the control of One who is able to make all things work together for good to them that love Him.

VI

The oftener one reads this book, the deeper is the impression it makes of extreme antiquity. Justice has not been done to its outlandish and non-Jewish character. There are no references to the stock Israelite values—"the adoption and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises." There is no such suggestion as that of one of the psalmists, dealing with the same enigma, who, after relating at length how his mind had been baffled by the apparent course of Providence, is able to add: "Till I went into the sanctuary of God; then

understood I." Though Jordan is mentioned once, there is no reference to the familiar holy places of the Hebrew mind, such as Bethel and Sinai, Shiloh and Zion; and, though there is abundant description of natural scenes, the objects are Oriental, not specifically Palestinian. The attempts frequently made to locate the book in some reign or century of Hebrew history on account of similarity in social conditions miss the mark; because such oppressions and sufferings as the book describes have never been rare in the world, and they are the more common the more remote, in time or space, any region is from civilisation.

The position of the book in the history of human beliefs could be pretty well determined if the testimony to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body in xix. 26 could be regarded as clearly made out; but we have seen above how dubious this is; and it is very significant that the flash of inspired insight, if this be really its character, is never repeated in the rest of the book. Especially is it absent from God's address, in which is supplied the divine solution of the mystery. Here would have been the opportunity of developing the faith in a future life, had the author happened to possess it; but the divine Apologist depends entirely on the impressions as to the divine character supplied by the sublimer aspects of nature. The human mind is simply beaten down by the evidence for a

divine Being, whose purposes and operations are unsearchable.

The book is not so much a document in the orderly progress of revelation as a boulder dropped from some quarter unknown. Its unintelligibility adds greatly to this impression; for there is no book in Holy Writ which it is so impossible to translate. Numerous are the verses in the Authorised Version of which the ordinary reader can make nothing at all; and the efforts in the Revised Version at improvement, though numerous, are seldom very successful. Between verse and verse the connection is often extremely obscure; and everything in the Hebrew language bearing any resemblance to the written characters has to be tried by scholars in the hope of lighting upon a tolerable sense. Yet there is extraordinary copiousness, the energy of feeling demanding endless repetition and variety of expression. This may be adduced as evidence of advanced development in the resources of the language; but it seems rather attributable to the singular genius of the writer. Ewald excised from the address of God the passages descriptive of behemoth and leviathan as being on a different level of taste; and the younger scholars have generally followed this example, some inclining to place the war-horse also among the creatures eliminated. But, I suspect, to both the author and the audience to which the address of God as a

whole was sublime, the war-horse, leviathan and behemoth were the height of the sublime. Count Tolstoi found in *King Lear* the same overbalancing of the sublime in the direction of the grotesque; but there is no question that Shakspeare penned this drama or that the greatest of English critics have reckoned it amongst his primary works. The more perfect the art in any piece of literature, the more immune may it be supposed to be from interpolation; because the interpolator has first to persuade himself and then the public that his alteration is an improvement.

CHAPTER IX

THE SONG OF SONGS

I

A GENERATION ago there was a powerful school by which it was taught that the great difference between the Old Testament and the New is, that, whereas in the Old Testament God is a King and Judge, in the New He is our heavenly Father; and it was added that the great merit of Jesus as a teacher was to have carried the world away from the stern faith in God the Judge by revealing the twin truths of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. In England this was the drift of the preaching of the Broad Church; in Scotland the same ideas obtained wide circulation through the amiable and fascinating pages of George Macdonald; and even so wise and intelligent a foreign observer as Professor Dorner expressed at the time the opinion that this school was destined to carry all before it in Great Britain.

The movement of theological thought since that time, however, has not proved favourable to the fulfilment of the prophecy. Attention has been

concentrated as never before on the teaching of Christ; and it has been seen that, instead of dropping the Old Testament idea of God as King, He gave to it so much prominence that the Kingdom of God is the very name in the Gospels for His teaching as a whole; and, as for the idea of God as Judge, one of the most arresting elements in the doctrine of Jesus is that He Himself is the Judge of men, who at the Last Day will sit on the throne of His glory and separate those gathered before Him, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.

In like manner attention has been directed by scholars to the Old Testament with a keenness of investigation never known before, the writings of the prophets especially attracting the eyes of students; and it has been seen that the highest conception of God there is not that of a King or Judge. On the contrary, Jehovah is constantly presented as standing to His people in a relation higher than even that of Father. He is the Lover and Husband, and Israel is His bride or wife. The entire history of Israel was embraced within this commanding idea. Jehovah was conceived as having rescued Israel, like an imprisoned maiden, from the bondage of Egypt, and borne her away into the desert, where, with Sinai for the altar and the covenant as the contract of marriage, He made her His own. She subsequently proved faithless

to Him, and the Exile was represented as a divorce, by which He put her away. But His love was not extinguished. He took her back again "as a wife of youth"; and the prophets were continually exhorting the people to loyalty under the image of the faithfulness of a wife. Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel are all fond of this imagery, handling it with astonishing freedom and illustrating every phase of the relationship between God and His people by corresponding experiences in domestic life. The sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel, for example, is a prolonged allegory of unparalleled beauty and pathos, in which the profoundest religious ideas are set forth by means of their counterparts in the relations of a married pair.

But the Song of Solomon is the most expansive embodiment of this Old Testament idea. It makes use of the most pronounced and luscious language of human passion. The lovers address each other in the style of unmeasured hyperbole which in the East appears to be the natural language of affection. Thus, the one lover says :

Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair.
Thine eyes are as doves behind thy veil;
Thy hair is as a flock of goats,
That lie along the side of Gilead.
Thy teeth are like a flock of ewes that are newly shorn,
Which are come up from the washing, whereof everyone hath twins,
And none is bereaved among them.
Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,

And thy mouth is comely.
Thy temples are like a piece of a pomegranate.
Behind thy veil.*

And the other says :

My beloved is white and ruddy,
The chiefest among ten thousand.
His head is as the most fine gold,
His locks are bushy and black as a raven.
His eyes are like doves beside the waterbrooks,
Washed with milk and fitly set.
His cheeks are as a bed of spices, as banks of sweet herbs.
His lips are as lilies dropping liquid myrrh.
His mouth is most sweet ; yea, he is altogether lovely.
This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
O daughters of Jerusalem.†

The scene lies partly in Jerusalem ; and this affords the opportunity of describing the splendours of Solomon's court, as, for example, in the following account of a royal journey :

Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke ?
Perfumed with myrrh and frankincense,
With all the powders of the merchant ?
Behold, it is the litter of Solomon ;
Threescore mighty men are about it,
Of the mighty men of Israel.
They all handle the sword, and are expert in war ;
Every man hath his sword upon his thigh,
Because of fear in the night.
King Solomon made himself a palanquin
Of the wood of Lebanon.
He made the pillars thereof of silver,
The bottom thereof of gold, the seat of it of purple,
The midst thereof being paved with love
From the daughters of Jerusalem.

* iv. 1-3. † v. 10-16.

Go forth, O ye daughters of Zion, and behold King Solomon
With the crown wherewith his mother crowned him in the day of
his espousals
And in the day of the gladness of his heart.*

And partly it lies in the country, where opportunity is found of describing the pleasantest aspects of nature and country-life, as in the following account of the coming of spring :

Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away ;
For, lo, the winter is past ;
The rain is over and gone ;
The time of the singing of birds is come,
And the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.
The figtree ripeneth her green figs,
And the vines are in blossom ;
They give forth their fragrance.
Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.†

The rustle and rush of awakening life, the answering voices of cooing mates, and the tumult of holiday sound through the whole work. The language flashes like the jewelled hilt of an Oriental sword, and at every movement new loveliness is disclosed, like the fluctuating colouring on a peacock's neck. But that which gives to it life, movement and glow is love.

II

The book is of the nature of a parable or allegory. On the surface it appears only to be a story of human love, but there is a deeper meaning underneath.

* iii. 10-16. † ii. 10-13.

The Song of Songs

In our Lord's parables sometimes the human story is unbroken and consistent from first to last, while at other times the divine meaning peeps through. In the Song of Solomon so completely is the artistic reserve maintained that it has sometimes been doubted whether there is an inner meaning at all. This ought not to be called in question ; but yet on the surface there is the human story, and it is necessary, first of all, to ascertain, if possible, what this is.

It is not easy to make it out. It is told, like the story of a drama, in a series of dialogues between different speakers ; but there is no list of the *dramatis personæ* at the beginning, nor are there marks in the text to show where one speaker leaves off and another commences.

As it used to be understood, King Solomon is the hero of the piece. In a progress through the northern part of his dominions with his court, he happens, in a rustic spot called Shulem, to glance through the latticed enclosure of a country-house, where he sees a maiden of exquisite beauty disporting herself, in the innocence of girlhood, under an apple-tree. Falling in love with her on the spot, he woos her to be his wife, and the ladies of the court tell her of his amiability and opulence. Her heart is won, and she is carried away to Jerusalem, where the royal nuptials are celebrated.

This is a simple story. But to many minds it is

repulsive for the reason that Solomon was a man who, by the polygamy which he practised, sinned grievously against the sacredness of love and the sanctity of marriage. Of course the book might refer to an early period of his life, when he was still acting in the spirit of the wisdom given him in answer to his famous prayer at his coronation. But unfortunately the book itself mentions that at the time to which it refers there were in his court threescore queens and fourscore concubines.

Hence a different reading of the story has been proposed and is now widely accepted.* It is, that the heroine, at the time when Solomon first saw her, in the circumstances described, was already betrothed to a shepherd of the neighbourhood, simple and pure like herself. It is to him, and not to Solomon, that her speeches of love and constancy are addressed. Solomon tries to win her love, and his efforts are backed by the persuasions of the ladies of the court; but she indignantly rejects all his advances. She is carried off to Jerusalem, but is not dazzled by the splendours of a palace. Even there she finds opportunity of meeting with her shepherd-lover, who has followed her to the capital;

* "He is full of the *Song of Solomon*, reading it in Hebrew: and he said that most people knew nothing about it, that in the coarsely-painted, misrepresented, ununderstandable story, given in the Bible translation, there is hardly a trace of what he calls 'the most perfect Idyl of the faithful love of a country girl for her shepherd, and of her resistance to the advances of a great king, that ever was written.'"—TENNYSON, *A Memoir*, vol. ii., p. 51.

and at last she escapes with him, or is released by the King, when he has been convinced that his suit is hopeless. In the closing chapter she is seen approaching her mother's house, leaning on her beloved, while she sums up the whole incident in the words :

> Many waters cannot quench love,
> Neither can the floods drown it.
> If a man would give all the substance of his house for love,
> He would utterly be contemned.*

III

So difficult is it, when the entire book is taken to be a dramatic whole, to distribute the utterances among the various speakers and to win from the details a consistent action that some scholars, giving up the attempt altogether, have regarded the book as a miscellaneous collection of separate pieces, with only the connection that they were intended for the prolonged celebration of an Eastern marriage. As they are all on the subject of love, the temptation would lie near to regard them as a handful of wildflowers from the field of profane Hebrew poesy transplanted into the garden of Holy Scripture. But it may be advantageous to begin with such a reading of the book, so as to familiarise the mind with the words and the ideas. Herder's classification is as good as any ; and he

* viii. 7.

assumes that there are the following separate poems —(1) i. 1-4; (2) i. 5-8; (3) i. 9-14; (4) i. 15-ii. 7; (5) ii. 8-14; (6) ii. 15; (7) ii. 16, 17; (8) iii. 1-4; (9) iii. 5; (10) iii. 6; (11) iii. 7-11; (12) iv. 1-v. 1; (13) v. 2-vi. 3; (14) vi. 4-9; (15) vi. 10-viii. 4; (16) viii. 5-7; (17) viii. 8-12; (18) viii. 13, 14.

The spirit of the whole is, however, so unique, and there are so many echoes between one portion and another, that the impression of connection and unity forces itself on the student. We may, therefore, next give the division attempted by Delitzsch, a scholar whom this portion of Scripture attracted from the very beginning of his academic career and who was in many ways specially gifted for extracting the secret of such a composition. To him Solomon is the hero; the King and the Shulamite are the interlocutors; and the ladies of Solomon's court are the chorus. (1) i. 2-4, the court-ladies; (2) i. 5-7, the Shulamite; (3) i. 8, the court-ladies; (4) i. 9-11, Solomon; (5) i. 12-14, the Shulamite; (6) i. 15, Solomon; (7) i. 16-ii. 1, the Shulamite; (8) ii. 2, Solomon; (9) ii. 3-7, Shulamite; (10) ii. 8-17, Shulamite; (11) iii. 1-5, Shulamite; (12) iii. 6, a citizen of Jerusalem; (13) iii. 7, 8, second citizen; (14) iii. 9, 10, third citizen; (15) iii. 11, the crowd; (16) iv. 1-5, Solomon; (17) iv. 6, Shulamite; (18) iv. 7-15, Solomon; (19) iv. 16, Shulamite; (20) v. 1, Solomon; (21) v. 2-8, Shulamite; (22) v. 9, the

court-ladies; (23) v. 10-16, Shulamite; (24) vi. 1, court-ladies; (25) vi. 2, 3, Shulamite; (26) vi. 4-9, Solomon; (27) vi. 10, court-ladies; (28) vi. 11, 12, Shulamite; (29) vi. 13, the court-ladies and Shulamite; (30) vii. 1-5, the court-ladies; (31) vii. 6-9, Solomon; (32) vii. 9b-viii. 4, Shulamite; (33) viii. 5a, b, a villager of Shulem; (34) viii. 5c, d, e, Solomon; (35) viii. 6, 7, Shulamite; (36) viii. 8, Shulamite; (37) viii. 9, Shulamite's brothers; (38) viii. 10-12, Shulamite; (39) viii. 13, Solomon; (40) viii. 14, Shulamite.

According to Ewald, Solomon is not the hero who succeeds in winning the affections of the heroine. This place belongs to a shepherd-lover, about whom the heroine is constantly thinking when she gives expression to her feelings. Solomon and his corrupt court represent, on the contrary, the attractions of idolatry and worldliness, which were always attempting to draw Israel away from allegiance to Jehovah. Ewald supposes the action of the poem to extend over five days; and the following is the division proposed by him—*First day*, i. 1-7, the Shulamite; 8, the court-ladies; 9-11, Solomon; 12-14, Shulamite; 15, Solomon; 16-ii. 1, Shulamite; 2, Solomon; 3-7, Shulamite. *Second day*, ii. 8-iii. 5, Shulamite. *Third day*, iii. 6-11, citizens of Jerusalem in front of one of the gates; iv. 1-7, Solomon; iv. 8-v. 8, Shulamite. *Fourth day*, v. 9, court-ladies; 10-16, Shulamite; vi. 1, court-ladies; 2, 3,

Shulamite; 4-vii. 9, Solomon; vii. 10-viii. 4, Shulamite. *Fifth day*, viii. 5a, b, shepherds of Shulem; 5c-14, Shulamite.

IV

If the intention of the poet was to delineate pure wedded love, then, in so far as he was successful, he could not help depicting at the same time, whether he intended it or not, the love of Jehovah to Israel or of Christ to the Church; because, as is proved by scores of passages in both the Old Testament and the New, the pure love of man and woman, wherever it exists, is a type of the relationship between the Redeemer and the redeemed.

It is constantly taken for granted that the supreme doctrine of Christianity is the fatherhood of God; but there is a higher and more typical species of love than that of father and son; and this has its counterpart in religion likewise. The love of man and woman is, in not a few respects, extremely different from that of parent and child. A father's love has no choice, it springs up of necessity as children are born, and it is the same to all his children; and a child has for its parent an affection of which it cannot remember the beginning. On the contrary, in the love of man and woman there is a choice—even, it may be said, a certain arbitrariness—for can anyone tell why love kindles at the sight of one face and not at that of another?

The answering love, likewise, may have a very distinct and clearly remembered beginning. Now, in religion there are experiences corresponding to both of these types of human affection; and these have been laid hold of by opposite schools of religious thought; for this is our way: we take one half of the truth and make of it a watchword or party-badge, leaving the other half to be similarly appropriated by others. There are those who dwell exclusively on the love which God has for all His children, and which He cannot help having, any more than an earthly father can help loving his offspring; and they believe that all men have in them at least the rudiments of religion, because they have a religious faculty and religious wants. All are God's children, they think, though they may not yet be aware of the fact, and what they require is to realise the sonship they already possess. Others, on the contrary, dwell by preference on the special love which God has to His own. He chose Israel to be His peculiar people from among all the nations; and living Christians are conscious that God has separated them from the rest of the world, though they cannot tell why they have been taken and others left. These can often remember, too, very distinctly the point at which their own love to God was first kindled, and perhaps they would describe their previous state of mind as one of enmity against God.

In both these rival views there is truth; but the profounder truth belongs to the one which compares the relationship between God and the soul to that of the most august, intense and typical form of human love. It was through sympathy with this point of view that the book with which we are now dealing was admitted into the canon of Scripture. In the Middle Ages it was the favourite book of Scripture in the religious houses, and the most noted sermons of the greatest preacher of the period, Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, are on the intercourse between Christ and the human spirit, who employ towards each other the language of the Canticles. Indeed, wherever the mystical conception of religion has flourished, it has found in this book its natural expression. The Evangelical Revival, which produced such rapturous expressions of love to Christ as are to be found in the Olney Hymns, did not feel the language of the Song of Songs too warm for its emotion; and people still alive can remember how aged preachers used to bring to the communion-table sermons and addresses founded on texts out of this book. Very suddenly, however, and completely has this passed away. It is difficult to say whether the change is due to a difference of taste or a decay of sentiment; and it is equally difficult to say whether it is temporary or permanent.

V

The other alternative is that the Song is a poem of unwedded love, or rather of love not yet wedded, the heroine being the Shulamite and the hero her shepherd-lover; and it is an interesting question whether, if identified as such, it would have been entitled to a place in the canon. There are those who would answer this question in the affirmative. Supposing the book was written as a protest against the irregularities of Solomon's age and especially of that erring monarch himself, they maintain that the restoration and the maintenance of a lofty tone on this branch of human existence formed a motive not unworthy of divine inspiration.

Certainly religion is profoundly interested in the ideals of human love prevailing in any community. This is a subject which is supposed, by the rules of conventionality, to be excluded from the pulpit; it has been handed over to the novelists and the dramatists, who have adopted it as their stock in trade; but too much depends on it, not only for the happiness but likewise the goodness of human beings, to justify the occupants of the pulpit in leaving it to others, without the influence of religion and the guidance of the Bible. A human life is never more directly in the way of being either made or marred than in the hour when the heart is given into the

custody of another. Next to the grace of God, there is no gift of Heaven more precious than a pure and successful affection. Where, on the contrary, the intercourse of the sexes is regulated by low and false conceptions of what love is, society is corrupted through and through, the homes of the people lose the inward cohesion on which peace and prosperity depend, and ultimately the State, which is a structure reared on the sunk arches of the home, verges to its fall. All these dangers must have threatened the Jewish community when King Solomon was setting to his subjects such an evil example; and a book like this may have been the very thing required to counteract the prevailing tendencies.

Pure human love, even apart from religion, may, in many respects, be called the greatest thing in the world; but it may also be called a prophecy and promise of the advent of religion. There are secrets in religion which nothing else can illustrate so well. Take, for instance, the purifying power of love. The entrance into the heart of a pure affection is the one thing which can put an end to the struggle with lust in which many aspiring souls are entangled, or rid the imagination of the images begotten there by unholy passion. It purifies and sweetens the whole atmosphere, till nothing base can live in it. This, however, is precisely the way in which pure religion operates. Its secret is what

was called by Chalmers the expulsive power of a new affection. It is Christ in the heart that drives out selfishness and worldliness.

No less suggestive is another aspect of the same experience. It is notorious how love can make difficult things easy and impossible things possible. Services which, if demanded by others, would be menial and irksome become light as air when they are required by one whose image is filling the heart. But this is the very secret, too, of following Christ. To the loveless the cross of Christ is an intolerable bondage; but to the loving His yoke is easy and His burden light.

According to the logic of things, the love of God and Christ ought to be primary and supreme in human experience, all other forms of love being deduced from this one and put into their own places of subordination. In point of fact, however, the majority learn love the opposite way. The love of parents, the love of brothers and sisters, the love of friends, the love of sex may all be known before the love of God and the love of Christ. If so, these are harbingers of a greater and more perfect experience still to come; and whatever anyone has learned from these preceding affections of its rise in the heart and its history—of its sweet secrets, its delightful memories and its powerful influence—may be a reminder that for him the history of the heart is still incomplete, and that he can never know

the best which life can afford until he loves the Lord his God with all his heart and with all his soul, with all his strength and with all his mind, and until he is able joyfully to answer the question of the Saviour, " Lovest thou Me ?"

CHAPTER X

MUSIC

I

How closely music is connected with poetry in the Bible is proved by the fact that a great many pieces of its poetry have come down to us with musical marks still attached to them. The words, for example, at the beginning or the end of a poem, "To the chief musician," are, if the translation can be depended on, indubitable evidence that it was written to be sung. Every reader has observed the frequency with which the word "Selah" occurs. It sometimes appears more than once in the same piece. It obviously denotes a pause of some kind, and in not a few of the places where it occurs there is an obvious pause in the sense, so that it may indicate the commencement of a new paragraph or strophe, as it is called. But it is more likely that it is a musical direction of some kind. The most probable derivation would give the meaning of "Up!"; but whether this means that the singers are to sing more loudly or that they are to hold up

their voices, to allow the music of instruments to come in, can only be a matter of conjecture. Like most of the marks in the superscriptions, this had so early become unintelligible that even the Seventy, who translated the Old Testament into Greek, could only guess at it. It is known that in all times of religious and musical revival sacred pieces have been adapted to pre-existing secular airs ; and some of the headings suggest such an origin. Such are Psalm xxii. "Hind of the Dawn," Psalms lvii., lviii., lix., lxxv. "Destroy not," Psalm lvi. "The Silent Dove of them that are afar off." "Song of Loves," in Psalm xlv., is appropriate enough as the heading of a bridal song. Other headings seem to refer to the particular instruments with which the music was to be executed. "Neginoth," occurring in six Psalms, seems to mean that the tune was to be played on stringed instruments, whereas "Nehiloth," in Psalm v., may mean "To the accompaniment of flutes." Certain it is that all the three kinds of musical instrument—string, wind and percussion—had their part to play in the worship of the sanctuary; though it is doubted whether they were employed together, as they would be in a modern orchestra. There are four different names for Psalms, one of which is generally supposed from its derivation to signify a didactic poem, while another for the same reason is understood to be a dithyramb ; but Ewald is of opinion that the four names stand for different

measures, similar to the Phrygian, Lydian and other measures in Greek music. To the same quarter he would refer the word " Gittith," supposing it to be a measure brought from the Philistine town of Gath, as well as " Sheminith." About all these—or nearly all—scholarship is in a humiliating state of uncertainty. Yet one thing is clear, that together they yield abundant evidence of how closely music and poetry were connected together.

This connection is natural. The praise of God is originally a thought or a sentiment of the mind within. It may be the thought of how wonderful and good God is, or it may be the sentiment that we love Him because He has first loved us. If such a thought or sentiment be really in the mind, warming and inspiring it, this is real praise, which ascends to God and is pleasing to Him, even if no single sound is uttered. But, when such thoughts and sentiments fill the mind, they naturally crave for utterance, and they lay hold of the choicest means of expression.

One of these is poetry. It might be thought that, if only the mind be full of sentiments of reverence and adoration, it does not matter how common or ill-arranged be the words in which it expresses itself. But this is not so. The intenser the inward feeling, the stronger is the longing for the choicest expression. For example, when the mind is contemplating the glory of God in the heavens, it is

with the deepest satisfaction that it obtains words like these in which to express itself :

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.

The unwearied sun from day to day
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land
The work of an almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth.

And all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn
Confirm the tidings, as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

In reason's ear they all rejoice
And utter forth a glorious voice,
Forever singing, as they shine,
The hand that made us is divine.*

We can hardly perhaps tell why we like to hear words rolling and rhyming in this way, any more than we can explain why, on any festive or ceremonial occasion, we instinctively dress not in common but in better clothing. All we can say is, that it is a satisfaction to our feeling, when it is intense and exalted, to make use of such unusual modes of expression.

* This is one of the five hymns appended to the Scots Paraphrases, and its author was ADDISON.

Music

Another means of expression which praise also lays hold and makes use of is music. Poetry, even when it is only read, forms a gay and gorgeous clothing for thought; but it can be made much more gorgeous by being sung; and, when thought is exalted and feeling intense, this mode of manifestation, also, is desired. If we cannot tell why words rolling and ringing in the shape of rhythm and rhyme move us, it is equally mysterious why the rising and falling notes of music affect us; but undoubtedly they do affect us profoundly. Even without words at all they can do so. When a band of music starts in the street, it instantly brings spectators to the windows; and the strains of military music not only draw a crowd, wherever they turn, but raise martial sentiment in the mind and keep off the sensation of fatigue, even though associated with no words;* although of course, when the musical sounds are associated with words

* Even the lower animals are sensitive to this spell, as has been noted by SHAKSPEARE in the well-known lines of *The Merchant of Venice* (v. i):

> For do but note a wild and wanton herd,
> Or race of youthful and unhandled colts,
> Fetching mad bounds, bellowing and neighing loud,
> Which is the hot condition of their blood;
> If they but hear perchance a trumpet sound,
> Or any air of music touch their ears,
> You shall perceive them make a mutual stand,
> Their savage eyes turned to a modest gaze
> By the sweet power of music.

well known, the effect is still more certain. The music seems to have the power of heightening the sentiment and enabling the mind to discharge the full force of its thought. While undoubtedly the fundamental element in praise is the feeling towards God with which the soul is filled, poetry and music may be called the two pinions—pinions covered with silver and their feathers with yellow gold—on which it is borne aloft to the quarter to which it is directed.

II

In the Bible the origin of music is ascribed to Jubal, a descendant of Cain; and, as it was not in the Cainite, but in the Sethite branch of the human race that religion was cultivated in the days before the Flood, this may be an indication that the earliest pieces of music were secular. Its employment in secular scenes, as in domestic merry-making and in war, is mentioned in all stages of the Old Testament history. We even hear not infrequently of the profane use of music when it was made an adjunct of luxury and debauchery. "Woe," exclaims Isaiah, "unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that tarry late into the night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the lute, the tabret and the pipe, and wine, are in their feasts: but they regard not the

work of the Lord, neither have they considered the operation of His hands."*

It is not unusual to hear music spoken of as if it were all, in its own nature, sacred. This, however, is absurd. There is a music which can minister to the worst which is in man and help to let loose the wildest elements of human nature, just as there is a music which can still the tempest of contending passions and give to the best feelings the opportunity of asserting themselves. But it is true that music, at its best, has a sacred character, and that its highest effects can only be evoked in the service of goodness. This was a sentiment which ruled the whole of antiquity. Plutarch, for example, the Greek historian and moralist, says that music was held so sacred by the fathers of the Greek race that its use was permitted only for two purposes—the worship of God and the education of the young; even the laws of the State watched over its dignity and simplicity; and Timothy of Miletus was sharply reproved by the magistrates of Sparta for attempting to introduce a lyre with eleven, instead of the customary seven, strings. In Israel, it need hardly be said, this sentiment guided the development of music, which was intimately associated with the worship of God.

In an earlier chapter the poem composed by Moses to celebrate the Passage of the Red Sea has

* Isa. v. 11, 12.

been mentioned; but it has now to be added that it was executed in a style implying previous acquaintance with the musical art, as well as the possession of musical instruments: "And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances."* The excited yet measured movements of the body, characterized as dancing, formed an element in primitive worship;†

* Exod. xv. 20.

† "In post-exilic as in pre-exilic times, delight in nature, as well as delight in history, appears inseparably united with the joy of dancing"—DELITZSCH, *Iris*. The ingenious author gives, from both biblical and extra-biblical sources, many examples, of which the following is perhaps the most extraordinary: "When the high day at the beginning of the Feast of Tabernacles was at an end, priests and Levites set to work in the Women's Court of the Temple and erected a double gallery for the spectators, the upper for the women and the lower for the men. Enormous candelabra were set up, each with four gilded bowls. Mounted on ladders, four young priests supplied these with oil, and wicks without number were laid in the bowls. When the lamps of these candelabra began to sparkle and the light on the numerous torches was added, not only was the temple converted, as it were, into a sea of fire, but the whole of Jerusalem to its remotest courts was illuminated. It was not women, but men, the foremost and most honoured of the city, who performed the play of the torch-dance. They danced with torches, throwing them into the air and catching them again, often performing prodigies with the dexterity acquired by long practice. Music and singing sounded forth without ceasing, for, on the fifteen steps which led down from the court of the men to that of the women stood the Levites with citherns, harps, cymbals, and many other instruments, and struck up song after song. At the top of the fifteen steps at the Nicanor Gate, two priests waited for the first crowing of the cock, to announce with three blasts of the trumpet the breaking of the day, the signal on

and it is found mentioned as late as the last of the Psalms :

> Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet :
> Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.
> Praise Him with the timbrel and dance :
> Praise Him with stringed instruments and the pipe.
> Praise Him upon the loud cymbals :
> Praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.*

As the Egyptians were a musical people, it has been supposed that it was from them the Israelites acquired the musical art ; and experts are wont to say that it is from the representations of musical instruments on the Egyptian monuments that the best notion can be obtained of the instruments mentioned in Scripture. But the tradition of musical proficiency among the ancestry of the Israelites goes back to a higher date ; for Laban, when reproaching Jacob for taking flight from his home, said : " Wherefore didst thou flee secretly, and steal away from me ; and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth and with song, with tabret and with harp ?" Yet in the directions for the worship of God proceeding from Moses music has little or no place, the blowing

which this nightly carnival was followed with the pouring out of the water of Siloam. Simultaneously with the wine libation of the morning sacrifice, water fetched from Siloam was poured upon the altar, as sensible symbol of the promise : ' With joy shall ye draw water from the wells of salvation.' One of the discourses of Jesus on the seventh day of this feast (John vii. 37-39) relates to the pouring out of Siloa's water."

* *Cf.* also Psalm cxlix. 3.

of the silver trumpets, as signals for the arrival of sacred times or the commencement of certain acts of worship, being the only performances of this kind enjoined.

It was in the prophetic schools, founded by Samuel, that music was first seriously cultivated; and, as these were both a sign and a cause of the uprising of a loftier spirit in the nation, music may be said to have been from the first associated with religious revival, as it has been in innumerable instances since. In his youth, David was a sharer in this influence, the effect being seen in the service he was able to render by his music to the sick soul of King Saul. When he came himself to the throne, he made use of music as a means of education, and he appears to have invented new instruments of music himself. Reference has been made in a previous chapter to his causing the Song of the Bow to be taught to the children of his people; and towards the end of his life his arrangements about the Levites are mentioned in detail, including the notice that "four thousand praised the Lord with the instruments which I made, said David, to praise therewith."* As might have been expected, this development continued under King Solomon; and at the dedication of the temple there was an unexampled display of the musical resources of the nation—"the Levites which were the singers, all of

* 1 Chron. xxiii. 5.

them, even Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, and their sons and their brethen, arrayed in fine linen, with cymbals and psalteries and harps, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets, when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying,

> For He is good;
> For His mercy endureth forever."*

In subsequent reigns, like those of Hezekiah and Josiah, whenever religion was revived, it was one of the first cares of the reforming kings to restore the body of sacred performers to a state of efficiency. When the Israelites were carried captive to Babylon, a reputation for music seems to have preceded them; for their captors called for mirth, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion." But their hearts were too sick and sore; and they hung their harps upon the willows.† As, however, the Babylonians were a musical people, it is a possible thing that the knowledge and skill of the captives were enriched by their sojourn by the rivers of Babylon. The clash and clang of this Babylonian music enter with a peculiar threefold repetition—as if to suggest its barbarous insistence—into at least one narrative of the captivity, where there is mention of "the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer and all kinds of music."‡ At all events,

* 2 Chron. v. 12, 13. † Psalm cxxxvii. ‡ Dan. iii. 5, 10, 15.

when the exiles returned to their own native land, they carried back with them the instruments and the skill of their fathers; and, when they had rebuilt their temple, there was a great gathering of all the Levites that could be found capable of leading the devotions of the people "with the musical instruments of David the man of God."*

Down to this point the sacred music appears to have been performed only by choirs set apart and trained for the purpose.† It was, it would appear, in the synagogues, which arose everywhere after the return from the Exile, that the next great step was taken—that of allowing the whole body of worshippers to take part in the singing. This was an immense advance; because the result was the training of the whole population to bear a part in both the words and the music of sacred song. This practice passed over from the synagogue to the Christian Church; and in the New Testament not only do we find song in the public worship, but Christ and His disciples sing a hymn together in the upper room, before He goes forth to Gethsemane;‡ and in the dungeon of Philippi, at midnight, Paul

* Neh. xii. 27-42.

† In Psalms cxxxvi. and cxviii. 1-4, however, some have seen indications of portions intended to be supplied by the people as a whole, and, if the Psalms of Degrees, mentioned in an earlier chapter, were so called for the reason now generally supposed, a wide participation of the whole body of the pilgrims must be assumed.

‡ Matt. xxvi. 30.

and Silas sing praises to God and the prisoners listen to them.* In St. Paul's own most extended reference to sacred song,† it is perhaps characteristic that he lays emphasis on the educational value of united praise, the practice of learning and singing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" leaving in the mind such a deposit of instruction that almost unawares the word of Christ dwells richly in those accustomed to sing with grace in their hearts unto God.

III

What the character of the music practised by the Hebrews was it is now impossible to tell with much certainty. The opinions of experts have varied exceedingly, some ascribing to it the highest perfection, while by others it has been held to have been extremely rude and undeveloped; and a decision is much hampered by the extent to which the references to it in their literature are now unintelligible. There does not appear to have been any system of notation; so that none of their music has come down to us in a written form. No doubt they had definite tunes, but these were learned by ear and transmitted from singer to singer. It is not believed by experts that the music of the modern synagogue is a safe guide to that of biblical times.

* Acts xvi. 24. † Col. iii. 16.

Neither is it supposed that the singers were acquainted with what we call harmony—that is, the combination of the different parts—the air, the tenor, the alto and the bass. But they seem to have been fond of what may be called a consecutive harmony: that is, the choir was divided into different parts, which answered one another, either singing the same words over and over or dividing the piece, so that the one would appear to be asking a question and the other replying to it. Some Psalms, such as the twenty-fourth, would appear to have been composed with a view to this effect.

Instrumental was combined with vocal music. For this they had the great example of David, though the practice was older than his day. Yet the instrumental was always kept in subordination to the vocal, being considered a mere accompaniment to the words. Sometimes the use of instruments in the praise of God is spoken of as if it had been a portion of the Mosaic economy; but, as has been shown above, it was not by Moses, but by Samuel, David and Solomon that it was introduced and developed. It would be truer to say that it is a part of nature. In the same way as the sentiment of praise, when urgent in the mind, naturally lays hold of poetry and vocal music as means of expression, so it is its nature to lay hold of this third means, when it is available. When, under the canopy of the midnight sky, David's heart was

swelling with the adoration which he poured forth in the words of the eighth Psalm, it was not a whit less natural for him to lay his fingers on the harpstrings than it was to choose for his thoughts the poetic form or to lift up his voice in melodious sound; and it served the very same purpose—that of giving to thought perfect and beautiful expression. This is the test of this final element in praise—whether it is capable of uniting with the earlier ones in giving to the sentiment form and expansiveness and carrying it upwards to its object.

Music belongs, by its very nature, to what may be called the excess and overflow of life. It is what colour is to nature. Grass could grow, there is little doubt, without its lovely green colour; the apple and peach trees could produce their fruit without the antecedent glory of their blossom; the clouds could water the earth without ever being massed in the splendour of the sunset, and the sun could rise without the rosy glow in which he bathes the world. But nature is prodigal of her benefits. The world has not been made for mere utility. Life has its flush and superfluity; and so, while praise might be genuine though it were only in the secret heart, it is its nature to array itself in the gorgeous robes of poetry and to use, for expansion and enrichment, not only the varying tones of the human voice but also instrumental accompaniment.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A*

AN EXPOSITION OF PSALM II

THE Psalms are poems; but in some of them the poetical element is much more concentrated than in others. As in the poems of Wordsworth, so in the Psalms, some pieces are just above the level of prose, while others soar, like birds, into the realm of the imagination. To the latter class the Second Psalm belongs: nothing more poetical could be pointed out in any literature. The theme is the honour of the Son of God; but this is not set forth in abstract propositions, but pictorially. There are four pictures, perfectly distinct from one another; yet one story moves through them all, and the artistic balance is carefully preserved, an equal number of verses being assigned to each scene. There is no hurrying; every scene is painted with careful elaboration. Yet the whole Psalm consists of only twelve verses. It is a marvellous example of *multum in parvo*. The exposition is introduced here in illustration of what was said about parallelism and the discovery of paragraphs or strophes in poetry.

The four pictures may be named, respectively, Revolt, Retort, Interpretation, Admonition.

* See p. 30.

An Exposition of Psalm II.

(1) Revolt.—The first scene is depicted in the first three verses :

> Why do the nations rage,
> And the peoples imagine a vain thing ?
> The kings of the earth set themselves,
> And the rulers take counsel together,
> Against the Lord, and against His anointed, saying,
> Let us break their bands asunder,
> And cast away their cords from us.

When, in accordance with the Revised Version, the word " nations " is substituted for " heathen," and the plural " peoples " for the singular " people," it is manifest at once that this is a picture of Revolt. The subject nations and peoples round the Holy Land have become restless under the yoke. A spirit of disaffection has spread among them. Messengers have been sent from one petty court to another, whispering treason and proposing union for the common aim of emancipation. At last the movement has reached a head. The air is electric with change. Over wide regions are audible the clang of armour and the muster of armies. It is a great combination of revolting states. All this is expressed in a single verse, in the brief sentences of which seem to be heard the growls of discontent and the feet of converging multitudes. The parallelism, also, is simple and perfect.

In the second verse we are carried into the council-tent of the revolters. In the midst of the assembled armies there is a tent, in which are convened the leaders of the various elements of which the combination is composed : as the verse

says, "the kings set themselves," that is, at the council-table—and "the rulers (though the old translation "princes" was perhaps better) take counsel together." Through the mists of the past the eye sees very clearly that tent of the kings and the princes in the midst of the smaller tents with which the surrounding plain is dotted. In front of it a flag is flying, and sentries are on guard, while within, round the board, fret those warriors of the olden time—the old, proud kings and the young, eager princes. It is a dark deed they are plotting, and their tones are low and muffled. Yet now and then loud, ringing words burst out; for their hearts are full of passion. Then again, however, fear subdues their tones; for they are conscious that it is a perilous and even a desperate enterprise in which they are engaged. But no! they will not believe it to be desperate, and they will not turn back from the purpose which has brought them together. The parallelism is not quite so simple as in the first verse, the two parallel lines requiring to be supplemented by a third, which is common to them both.

At last they come to a unanimous decision, and this is expressed in the third verse, where also the parallelism is simple and complete:

> Let us break their bands asunder,
> And cast away their cords from us.

Like steers bound with bands and cords to the plough or other burden, they have been in vassalage to Jehovah and His anointed; but the yoke has been grievous and intolerable; and now, like oxen, when in a fit of rebellion and frenzy they kick over the

traces and snap the harness binding them to the burden, they will break free from control and assert their independence.

It is a picture of the olden time—of an age of the world when war was every man's trade, and poetry naturally borrowed its imagery from that source—when the rule of religion and morality was represented by the sovereignty of the Holy Land among the tribes by which it was surrounded—and when Jehovah was accounted the King of the country, the reigning sovereign being His vicegerent. But the thing represented under these ancient figures is modern enough : it is the opposition of the world to the reign of goodness ; it is the attempt of the persecutor or the traditionalist to arrest the progress of the kingdom of light and love ; it is the enmity of the natural heart to the authority which curbs its lawless impulses.

(2) RETORT.—The second scene is depicted in the second triplet of verses :

> He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh :
> The Lord shall have them in derision.
> Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,
> And vex them in His sore displeasure :
> Yet have I set My king
> Upon My holy hill of Zion.

Perhaps this is the point at which the poetic originality of this Psalm reaches its climax. Having depicted the first scene in the first three verses, the poet places side by side with it one which stands to it in the most absolute contrast. The first scene is on earth, this one is in heaven ; the first is a scene of

wild excitement, this is one of absolute calm. There above, in the serenity of heaven, is sitting One who is surveying all that is taking place below. The revolters do not see Him; they are not thinking about Him or taking Him into account at all; but He sees them. Theirs is a secret conclave, and they intend to keep their design and the method of its execution absolutely hidden, till the favourable moment has arrived; but He hears every word spoken, and He is reading off their hearts, as if they were an open book.

It is a precious situation. From the region of art or literature scenes can be recalled in which plotters, at the moment when they think themselves most close and secure, are being overlooked and detected. In such scenes there is always an element of the ludicrous, and sometimes such scenes may be extremely laughable. So says this Psalm: "He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh." The present, "is laughing," might be a better translation.

To represent the Deity as "laughing" is an extremely bold flight of the poetic imagination; yet it is not altogether unexampled. Authors of a melancholy and cynical cast of mind have described God as the Aristophanes of the universe, who sits aloft in the eternal calm of His self-sufficiency and contemplates the designs and doings of human beings, as a spectator might watch the movements of an anthill, mocking their littleness, smiling at the fever and the fret of their endeavours, which are pure vanity, because human life is only a madman's dream, signifying nothing. Such a representation

of God as this could not appear in Scripture. In the Bible man is never a trivial being, whose actions are of no consequence. On the contrary, his conduct always moves God: it may please and delight or it may distress and enrage Him, but it is never without moral significance.

So here there is a swift transition from laughter to a very different mood:

> Then shall He speak unto them in His wrath,
> And vex them in His sore displeasure.

God is not the distant, silent, amused but unconcerned spectator of the world. On the contrary, He comes down and intervenes in human affairs. Here He speaks out: His laughter passes first into anger, and then His anger passes into speech, His words being given in the last verse of this section:

> Yet have I set My king
> Upon My holy hill of Zion.

The printing in the Revised Version gives these words as two lines; but it is questionable if they form more than a single line. The interruption of the verse in the middle may be to indicate, by a sudden stop, the abrupt and decisive character of the oracle. Anyway, these words of God retort the words of the revolters. As the first section ended with their words, the result of their deliberations in the war-tent:

> Let us break their bands asunder,
> And cast away their cords from us

so Jehovah's contemplation of the scene below issues in words which He hurls against theirs :

> Yet have I set My king
> Upon My holy hill of Zion.

This great "yet" is flung across the path of the revolters, not only as an obstacle to check their advance, but as an obstacle which will explode and blow into space both them and their designs.

Those who are engaged in the work of God do not laugh enough; they do not sympathise enough with the laughter of God. But laughter is power. We take things too seriously ; we tremble too much for the ark of God ; we fret and vex ourselves too much at objections raised to religion and obstacles thrown in the path of the Gospel. When someone who has no religion himself begins gravely to propound his religious views ; when an upstart, who has not cut his wisdom-teeth yet, proposes with a wave of the arm to sweep away the convictions on which the greatest and the wisest of our race have lived and died ; when one who has never been out of his native country propounds with the air of Sir Oracle methods of dealing with the heathen which the most experienced missionaries have discussed a hundred times and rejected, we ought to see the ludicrous side of the case. The people of God ought to remember God's great "yet" which He still hurls in the face of His enemies, and to learn from it the art of tranquillity.

(3) INTERPRETATION.—The third scene is depicted in the third triplet of verses :

I will tell of the decree :
The Lord said unto me, Thou art My son ;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of Me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

In this section the language becomes more pregnant and, so to speak, shorthand than anywhere else in the Psalm. Not even Browning, in his most abbreviating mood, leaves so much to be divined. Yet it is all there; and, when looked at closely enough and long enough, it all becomes perfectly clear.

Obviously the scene is again changed : we are no longer in heaven, but back again on earth. We are not, however, among the revolters, but in the opposite camp, or rather between the one army and the other. The speaker now is the Lord's anointed, who is at the head of his troops. Apparently we are to conceive the two armies as confronting each other—the army of the revolters and the army of the anointed. But, before the battle is joined, the anointed comes forward into the space between the hostile forces and makes a last effort for peace. Lifting up his voice and addressing himself to the leaders of the revolters, he says, "I will declare (or "interpret") the decree.". . . Which decree is meant ? It is the decree with which the preceding section closed—the oracle flung by Jehovah in the face of His adversaries. But how do the revolters know anything about this decree ? They are

supposed to have heard it uttered. When Jehovah speaks in Scripture, it is in thunder He utters His voice; indeed, thunder is frequently called "the voice of Jehovah." When Jehovah, then, looking down on the council of war, at last uttered His voice, we are to understand that there burst over the revolting army such a roar of thunder as made them quake with terror and brought home to them the sense that they were being watched. They were compelled to remember the God above them, whom they had forgotten. But, as on one occasion, in the days of Christ's flesh, when His Father spoke to Him in an audible voice, the people standing by said that it thundered, while Jesus alone clearly and fully apprehended the divine message, so on this occasion the revolters, though appalled by the voice from heaven, only dimly comprehended its import; and, therefore, the anointed, on whose behalf it had been spoken, comes forward to explain to those whom it also concerns. "I will tell of the decree," he says, and then he proceeds, not to recite it verbatim, but to expound what it involves, and how it bears on him and on them.

The interpretation of the oracle is, "Thou art My son; this day have I begotten thee." In ancient Israel the reigning sovereign was spoken of as the son of Jehovah; and on the day on which he was enthroned he might be thought of as being begotten. It may be to this event that the king is looking back. Or it may be that at the present crisis of his history, when his enemies have combined to dislodge him from his seat, God has so manifestly renewed his title to his place that the occasion can be spoken of

as a new birth to his dignity—"This day have I begotten thee."

At all events, the divine voice has confirmed his position, and he goes on to explain what this implies: God's decree secures to him the entire sway embraced in the ancient promises to Abraham and in the sure mercies of David:

Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

Nothing could stand in the way of this decree. The nations might resist; but, if so, they would be broken in pieces like a potter's vessel—an image of complete and irretrievable destruction.

While all this has reference to some event of Hebrew history and to some king of David's line, there shines through it an ultimate application to the great Son of David. To Him Jehovah could say, "Thou art My Son," in a sense in which this could be said to no other. From all eternity He could say to Him, "This day have I begotten Thee," because He was begotten in the unbeginning and unending day of eternity. In the New Testament "this day" especially applied to the day of His resurrection and ascension, when, as Mediator, He was raised to the right hand of the Highest, all power being given unto Him in heaven and on earth. To Christ God has said in the fullest sense:

Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession.

It is not His, indeed, to bear sway with a rod of iron or to break opponents in pieces. This is

imagery native to an age when the character of God was but imperfectly known. The sceptre of Christ is love; and it is in the hearts of men, not over their prostrate persons, that His throne is erected. Still, He must reign, and, if there be wills which persistently and finally reject His love, these will be broken by force; for, "in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

(4) ADMONITION.—The last scene is represented in the three last verses:

> Now therefore be wise, O ye kings:
> Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
> Serve the Lord with fear,
> And rejoice with trembling.
> Kiss the son, lest He be angry, and ye perish in the way,
> For His wrath will soon be kindled.
> Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.

Who is the speaker in this section? It may be the anointed, who is continuing his address to the insurgent army. But it is more in keeping with the highly dramatic character of the Psalm to assume that there is a change of speaker. It is the poet himself, who, having observed the entire situation, comes forward out of the background as an intermediary and, like the chorus in a Greek play, draws the moral of the whole.

He addresses himself to the leaders of the insurgent army, whom, in the parallel lines, he calls "kings" and "judges"; because in the ancient world king and judge were interchangeable terms,

judging being one of the principal functions of kings. He counsels them to pause and be advised: they must themselves see, in the light of what is happening, that their enterprise is hopeless and may be fatal to themselves.

Therefore, he advises them to kiss the son—that is, to give to God's anointed and vicegerent the sign of allegiance. "Kiss the son, lest He"—that is, the Father, not the son—"be angry, and ye perish in the way, for His wrath will soon be kindled" (or perhaps, "His wrath is easily kindled"). He resents even a little disrespect offered to the son and will terribly avenge it.

In many passages of the Old Testament, and even in some of the Psalms, the only destiny thought of for the enemies of Jehovah is utter destruction. But in this Psalm there is another alternative. Instead of dashing themselves in pieces against Jehovah's buckler, His enemies are welcome to become His friends. No wonder they can hardly believe this; and their state of mind, as they draw near to make their peace, is described in an exquisite phrase—they "rejoice with trembling." This is exactly the condition of mind caused by conviction of sin, when through the darkness in which the soul is enshrouded there begins to struggle the dawn of forgiving love. But this dawn will grow and broaden, till, in the full enjoyment of salvation, all trembling comes to an end. Therefore, the Psalm closes with words of perfect peace—and it is to those who have been enemies they are spoken—"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him." This is nothing but the voice of the Gospel.

APPENDIX B*

AN EXPOSITION OF ECCLESIASTES XII. 1-7

"REMEMBER also thy Creator in the days of thy youth, or ever the evil days come and the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened, and the clouds return after the rain: in the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets; when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low; yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terror shall be in the way; and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the caper-berry shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern; and the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit return unto God who gave it."

* See p. 130.

Exposition of Ecclesiastes XII. 1-7

In many of the books of the Bible there occur lyrics which might be lifted out of the context and enjoyed by themselves; and one of the choicest of these is the description of Old Age in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, which is printed above. Even in the Revised Version it is not printed as poetry; but not only is it in spirit thoroughly poetical, but a hand very little practised could easily exhibit the parallelism in most of the verses.

The keynote of the poem is struck in the opening verse, where old age is described by the term "the evil days" or "the years of which thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." . . . This is the natural view of old age. Perhaps one might call it the pagan view; because it is the view which sometimes led the heathen to expose their own parents to the elements, when these had reached the stage at which they were useless and life was supposed to be no longer desirable even to themselves. It is the view expressed by a famous English poet, who was a clergyman by profession but a pagan at heart:

> That time is best which is the first,
> When youth and blood are warmer,
> But, being past, the worse and worst
> Times still succeed the former.

In the verses which follow the effects of old age are described, first on the mind, then on the body, next on the functions of the body, and lastly on the temper of the mind.

First are mentioned the effects of old age on the mental powers—"Or ever the sun, and the light, and the moon, and the stars be darkened, and the

clouds return after the rain." The language here is highly figurative, but by "the sun" appears to be meant the intellect or reason—what the Bible calls "the spirit"—which is, indeed, the luminary of the microcosm of human nature; and "the light" is the illumination of knowledge or principle which it sheds on the path. If this be correct, then "the moon" will denote the inferior powers of the mind—what the Bible calls "the soul," as distinguished from the spirit—while "the stars" may be the five senses, which stand half-way between mind and body. All these—sun and light, moon and stars—are "darkened": that is, the mental powers are enfeebled in old age: the senses no longer responding quickly to stimulus from without, the memory losing its hold, the intellect soon growing weary with exertion. "And," it is added, "the clouds return after the rain." In childhood and youth, after a rain of tears, the sunshine soon returns: sorrow is forgotten, and happiness and hope regain the mastery. But it is not so in old age: at this period of life losses and disappointments are so much the order of the day that no sooner, after rain, has the sky cleared up, than the clouds return again, foreboding another storm.

In the next verse we have the effects of old age on the body—"In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened." In all languages the body has been compared to a "house"—the house in which the soul lives. But here the different members of the

body are compared not to the different parts of the house, as might have been expected, but to its different occupants—first the men, then the women. The place of the men is to keep watch and ward and to discharge the tasks requiring strength, the members employed for these purposes being the legs and the arms. These are "the keepers" that tremble and "the strong men" that bow themselves; for in old age the limbs shake and shuffle, and the arms grow shrunken and palsied. Then the women of the house are mentioned. They are called "the grinders"; and the reason is well known to anyone acquainted with Eastern manners; for no commoner sight meets the observer in any Oriental interior than the women grinding the corn between the upper and the nether mill-stones. Another characteristic feature of Oriental life is that the women "look out at the windows." They are immured in the women's quarters; but their natural curiosity impels them to take every opportunity of peering from behind the jalousies and through the lattices. There can be little doubt to which parts of the body reference is made in these images. In our own language we call certain teeth "molars," from the Latin word signifying a mill, and the action of the upper and nether jaws in eating has an unmistakable resemblance to that of the stones in grinding. "The grinders," then, are the teeth; and just as obviously "those that look out of the windows" are the eyes. But in old age "the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows are darkened." Feebleness of vision is a common feature of old age,

and not infrequently in the East, where ophthalmia is exceedingly prevalent, it issues in total blindness.

Thirdly, the effects of old age on the functions of the body are described—"And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and one shall rise up at the voice of a bird, and all the daughters of music shall be brought low." I am not at all sure that the revisers have improved matters by connecting these words more closely than the Authorised Version did with what precedes, and by pointing with a semicolon, instead of a comma before "when." The sense of the preceding verse is complete at "darkened," and a new step is taken in the description at the commencement of verse 4. The door opened to the street is the symbol of social intercourse and of traffic with the world; but old age, unfit for the battle and the bustle, retires within, to the chimney-corner; and the door need not be open, for there is no longer the ceaseless coming and going. The same cessation of the activity of life—but with reference rather to the inner than the outer—is beautifully expressed by saying, "The sound of the grinding is low," or better, "The sound of the mill is low." This should not be thought of as having any reference to eating, to which grinding in the previous verse is compared. The idea is, that the whole tone of life is lower—the passion and the pace, the glow of ambition and the noise of exertion pass away—and everything is on a lower key. Even the function of sleep is no longer what it was; and so the old man shall "rise up at the voice of a bird." As the bodily powers grow feeble, it might be expected that

sleep would be longer and deeper; but the reverse is a well-known feature of old age: it awakens at the slightest noise—even the voice of a bird—and it rises out of bed at the crowing of the cock in the morning. The last feature here is—"All the daughters of music shall be brought low." Old age is able neither with its "childish treble" to contribute to song nor, with its impaired hearing, to derive pleasure from the performances of others, and this is a general sign for the decay of the powers by which art is cultivated and the sounds and colours of the world are enjoyed.

Fourthly, the effects of old age on the temper of the mind are described—"Yea, they shall be afraid of that which is high, and terror shall be in the way; and the almond-tree shall blossom, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and the caper-berry shall fail." Old age is "afraid of that which is high." This is both literally and metaphorically true. Literally it is true; because one of the first signs of the oncoming of age is that people feel a hill: where youth is not even aware that an ascent exists, old age is out of breath. But it is equally true metaphorically: old age is "afraid of that which is high" in the sense that to it novel and arduous schemes are formidable. "And terror shall be in the way"—old age sees all the lions in the path. Youth sees not these: it sees only the ideal, not the steps of reality by which it has to be reached. Youth, unaware of its limitations, casts itself without hesitation into enterprises far beyond its powers; but old age is so conscious of its limitations that it shrinks from what it could easily accomplish. "The

almond-tree shall blossom" is generally supposed to describe grey hairs; for the almond-tree, before its blossoms fall, is one mass of pure white from top to bottom. But this trait does not come in quite so well here as the one expressed in the next clause—"The grasshopper shall be a burden." The grasshopper is a proverbial image of what is light and trifling; so, a mere trifle—the least exertion, the most trivial task—is a burden to old age. "And the caper-berry shall fail"—this is a startling change from the Authorised Version—"desire shall fail"—but the explanation is simple—that the caper-berry was used by the ancients, as it is by ourselves, to give relish to food. But it no longer excites the appetite of old age; and, when thus the desire even for food fails, the end cannot be far off, when "man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets." In Eastern countries inhumation takes place outside the city-walls; and, as the procession wends its way to the cemetery through the streets, hired mourners follow the bier, emitting inarticulate sounds of grief or celebrating the virtues of the deceased in brief snatches of elegy.

At this point the poem takes a new start, in order that, after having expatiated on the frailties of old age, which precede death, it may characterise death itself; and the phrases in which this is done are incomparable in their beauty—"Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern." There are two images. The one is that of a lamp in a palace or temple,

suspended from the ceiling by a silver chain, while the oil by which the light is kept burning is contained in a golden bowl. Night and day the lamp burns steadily on, and to this is compared the flame of vital force continuing to burn in the human organism. But, either through the corrosion of time or through some accident, the silver chain snaps, the bowl is dashed on the marble pavement, and the light is extinguished. And so, in death, is the light of life put out. The other image is equally fine. It is that of an Eastern well, where the water is fetched up from below in a bucket or pitcher, at the end of a rope, which is wound on a wheel or windlass. Thousands of times has the pitcher descended, thousands of times has the wheel revolved. But some day the pitcher will descend for the last time; some day will the wheel revolve no more; for it is broken. And how like to this is the action of the lungs or the heart, going on for a lifetime with unfailing regularity; but at last the heart gives its last beat, the lungs expand for the last time; and all is over.

"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This is the Authorised Version, the Revised here being the reverse of an improvement. The body of man, fair as it is and noble as are its functions, is after all but part of the clay of the world; and its destiny is to return, after its work is done, to the place whence it came—earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust. But the spirit of man is of loftier derivation: it is a particle of divine air, a spark of celestial fire: and, when released from its work in

the service of the body, it returns to the place of its origin.

Such is the picture painted by the poet of Ecclesiastes of man's mutability and mortality. But for what purpose was it painted? This is made unmistakably clear in the opening words of the poem, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." It is a description of old age intended not for the aged but for the young.

Why, however, cause these melancholy images to pass before the eyes of the young? Is the idea simply to warn them that they must die and, therefore, ought to be prepared? This is a strong motive in religion. Death, judgment and eternity are words which smite the hearts of mortals with awful solemnity; and, especially when the strokes of death happen to be falling near ourselves or the revolving seasons remind us that our time is short, the thought will flash sometimes across the most careless, "Prepare to meet thy God." But, if this had been the idea of the Ecclesiast, he would not have placed death at the end of old age, but would have shown, in a series of striking examples, which it would have been easy to accumulate, how uncertain is the tenure of human life, and how, at any moment, death, coming from an unexpected quarter, may hurry man to his account; for it is this uncertainty that points the folly of trifling with religion and postponing to some future date the business of eternity. Although, therefore, this is a true thought, it is not the thought of the Ecclesiast. His is infinitely more original and more noble. What is

it? Why should the failure of the powers of mind and body in old age be a reason for remembering the Creator in youth? It is because religion is one of the pleasures of life—in fact, its purest and intensest pleasure—and, therefore, if it is wished to taste it at its best, this must be done whilst the powers of enjoyment are still keen, and before they have been blunted by inferior gratifications.

This thought is in accord with the message of the entire Book of Ecclesiastes, which is not, as it is often called, a pessimistic book, but optimistic in the highest degree. It is true, it denounces sinful pleasures; but there are other pleasures—pure and natural pleasures, such as those arising from industry, friendship and domesticity—which it not only does not denounce, but recommends, urging its readers not to miss them, but to drink deeply of them and, above all, not to linger, but to seize the cup while the power of enjoyment is still fresh. The greatest, however, of all such pleasures by far is God Himself. Therefore, whatever is missed, this pleasure must not be missed, but seized now, as long as the young are able to enjoy it—"Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth."

This is a view of religion which has never occurred to many—many have never conceived of religion as one of the pleasures of life. But is it not the true view? If there be a God, must He not be man's supreme happiness? Is not Jesus Christ the pearl of great price, for which it is worth while to sell every other possession? Away with the old notion, that religion is some kind of dose or potion, to be

taken as an insurance against the terrors of eternity! Either religion is a delusion and a lie or it is the pleasure of pleasures.

The truth of this is especially manifest when the active side of religion is considered. What is religion on its active or positive side? It is the sharing of Christ's enthusiasm, the doing of God's work, the championing of the cause of progress in the world. How can dying men do this? They have no time, they have no strength. Christ needs hearts young enough to feel the sin and misery of the world, minds fresh enough to devise the best means for improving the condition of society, and hands vigorous enough to carry such plans into execution. In short, none will ever know the full joy and glory of such a religion but those who remember their Creator in the days of their youth.

That, therefore, which this poem describes is not old age as it must be or as it ought to be: on the contrary, it describes an old age which has to be combated and circumvented. This is the old age of the pagan or natural man. If it be not exactly the old age of a sensualist, who has worn himself out in excesses and has now to pay the penalty, still less is it a religious old age. A religious old age is a very different thing. Often is it described in the Bible in terms very different from those of this poem, as, for example, in the well-known Psalm:

> Those that within the house of God
> Are planted by His grace,
> They shall grow up and flourish all
> In our God's holy place;

And in old age, when others fade,
They fruit still forth shall bring;
They shall be fat and full of sap,
And aye be flourishing.

This, then, is the argument: old age inevitably brings certain frailties and losses; but let those who would be able to cope with these remember their Creator in the days of their youth. This will ensure a very different old age from that here described. A sober, Christian life, as a rule, defers the advances of decay, the constitution remaining sound to the end. Cheerfulness attends a Christian's advancing years; because the best is still in front, and his eyes are turned not to the setting but to the rising sun. Aged Christians, instead of being afraid of that which is high and throwing cold water on every scheme for the advancement of the world, are often more enterprising than their younger fellow-workers; for they have learned to put their trust in God and not in an arm of flesh. An indescribable influence accumulates around a saintly old age, when behind every act and word there rises the image of a well spent life. And, even if there be infirmity of mind or body, brought on by years, this only adds pathos to the testimony. The blessing of an old man falls with all the more impressiveness, when it is given with a feeble voice and a trembling hand.

There are many of the young who have the intention of living for the world for a time, and then, at the last, turning to God and preparing for eternity. They may never, indeed, have avowed this intention to themselves in so many words, but

it is at the back of their minds, and it determines their conduct. Now, this ancient poem was written to pulverise such an idea and scatter it to the wind as utterly unworthy and false. There comes to my recollection an incident which occurred when I was at the University and profoundly affected me at the time, as it did not a few besides. There was a student, very well known as an athlete, who had a bad accident in the football-field. After a day or two the rumour circulated among the students that he had been fatally injured and could not recover; and this proved to be the case. He had not been a dissipated man, but he had been a careless one. Some of his fellow-students who were admitted to his room spoke to him about eternity; and his mind was opened to receive the message of the Gospel. But, as he was on the point of accepting Christ, he turned round and, with a peculiar smile, said to the friend conversing with him, "Would it not be a mean thing, after giving my life to the devil, to take all this from Christ at the last?" It is to be hoped that this did not prevent him from receiving the gift of God; but every young and generous mind must sympathise with his sentiment.

APPENDIX C*

AN EXPOSITION OF JOB XXXIII. 29, 30

> "Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living."

One of the most widely read among recent religious books is PROFESSOR JAMES' *Varieties of Religious Experience*. The author was one of the most eminent psychologists of the age, and in this work he applied his psychological skill to the phenomena of religion, showing how varied are the means by which a living interest in religion may be awakened in different persons.

The same title might be applied to the passage in the Book of Job of which the two verses above cited form the close, because the theme is the same —namely, the various ways in which the Spirit of God deals with the spirit of man—and it is interesting to compare the experiences of human beings in our own time, with which Professor James is concerned, with those of the men and women dealt with by the author of the Book of Job. This is a very old book; indeed, it used to be considered the oldest in the canon, going back as far as Moses or even earlier; and, though an antiquity as high as that is not now

* See p. 172.

assigned to it, it carries us back to an age of the world when everything differed from the aspects of the present age. Were, then, the dealings of the Spirit of God with the spirit of man also different then from what they now are, or were they identical? This is the interesting inquiry upon which we are to enter.

The passage begins at the fourteenth verse with the words: "For God speaketh once, yea twice, yet man perceiveth it not." Then, in four verses, the first way in which God speaks is described—namely, IN DREAM OR VISION:

> In a dream, in a vision of the night,
> When deep sleep falleth upon men,
> In slumberings upon the bed;
> Then He openeth the ears of men,
> And sealeth their instruction,
> That He may withdraw man from his purpose,
> And hide pride from man;
> He keepeth back his soul from the pit,
> And his life from perishing by the sword.

This may seem to carry us at once far from modern experience back into a visionary and unfamiliar past. But those who think so are not well acquainted with Christian biography; for in any collection of such experiences, even the most recent, there will be found instances in which a dream or vision has played a decisive part.

The state of the human mind in sleep is one of the great mysteries of existence. Some of those who have studied it most deeply have been led to the conclusion that the mind never sleeps, but, during the hours when the body is slumbering, goes

wandering on through mazes of fancy and amidst phantasmagories of ever-changing splendour. Of such phantastic fabrics the great majority are valueless, and are swept out of the memory with the return of waking consciousness. But now and then something that is of value remains from the wreck. One of the most remarkable of the poems of Coleridge is the recollection of a dream. One of the most noted among living story-tellers pretends, I know not with what amount of seriousness, that his plots come to him in dreams; and there are few, I should think, who cannot remember some valuable impression which, first visiting them in sleep, materialised in waking hours. Now why, among such impressions, should not religious ones have a place? We know that the forces of temptation are not idle whilst we are sleeping; because evil dreams are among the worst distresses of many a man striving after purity of soul. If, then, the powers of evil have access to the mind in sleep, why should not the Spirit of God have access to it too, to touch it to fine and noble issues?

Of course it would be easy to press this too far. If every religious notion or spectacle which presents itself in the dreaming state were to be regarded as an inspiration of the Spirit of God, the region of religious belief would be invaded by destroying hordes of caprice and confusion. But there is a plain rule which, if observed, will guard from such error: nothing of a religious nature occurring to us in dreams has any value if it be not in harmony with the Word of God. This rule will save us from anything like fanaticism. But, if an impression

reaching us in dreams makes any truth or fact of God's Word more vivid and real, disposing us to act in accordance with it, then we are justified in believing that there may be in our dream or vision a leading of the Spirit.

This first method in which God speaks is not, then, to be neglected; yet it may be called rare.

The second method in which God speaks is THROUGH ILLNESS:

> He is chastened also with pain upon his bed,
> And with continual strife in his bones:
> So that his life abhorreth bread,
> And his soul dainty meat.
> His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen;
> And his bones that were not seen stick out.
> Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit,
> And his life to the destroyers.

It would be difficult, in the whole compass of human literature, to find a more vivid description of illness. For instance, v. 19 speaks of "continual strife in his bones," though the old version was even more picturesque, when it spoke of "the multitude of his bones." In good health we scarcely know that we have bones; or, at all events, we have no sense of the complexity of the osseous structure; because, hidden under its comfortable integument, it does its work unfelt and as a whole. But in rheumatic fever and other maladies this wholeness is broken; we are conscious of every bone in our body, for there is a pain in every one of them; so that we know what Job meant by "the multitude of his bones." In v. 20 another feature of severe illness is given with equal realism: "His life abhor-

reth bread, and his soul dainty meat." Everyone who can remember a prolonged and prostrating illness will recall this aversion to food. The very sight of it fills the soul with loathing; and, although kind hands may have done their very utmost to make a choice morsel look dainty and appetising, the patient begs that it may be taken away out of his sight. In v. 21 the aspect of the sick man is described at a later stage, as, gaunt and deathlike, he raises himself up in bed, with sunken cheeks, hollow eyes, thin arms; or as, when he is not able for even this, he draws up his shrunken knees, so that they look as if they would actually pierce the coverlet. No wonder the next verse says:

> Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit,
> And his life to the destroyers.

In those ancient days it was sometimes by bringing a man into this condition that God spoke to him; and here at any rate there is nothing antiquated, for this is still a common way in which the Spirit of God deals with the spirit of man. To lay him down on a bed of trouble may be the only way in which God can get a man to think. Many are so involved in the rush and excitement of business that they have no time for reflection; and others are so engrossed in the pursuit of the gaieties and follies of the world that, though they have time enough for meditation, they have no taste for it. Is it not merciful if God lays such a one down on a bed of trouble? He is sequestered from company and forced to face his inner self, which he sees to be mean, squalid and unfurnished. Though he may

have been becoming rich in worldly goods, this has been at the expense of inner poverty. He sees all that he has been laboriously acquiring taking flight, whilst he is about to enter into the presence of God, to give in his account.

Or it may be in another form that the shadow of death appears in the home. Illness may fall upon one near and dear; death may carry off the pride of a man's heart and the light of his eyes; and, as he gazes into the pale kingdoms of death and hears the mighty waters breaking on the shore of eternity, folly dies in him, and he turns round to estimate the prizes of life with sane and altered eyes. It is often in the vast silence which falls on the heart bereaved that the voice of God is heard. The body of one has to die that the soul of another may live; and thus on many a grave in the churchyard there may be said to bloom flowers of immortality. This method of the divine dealing may be called the common.

The third way in which the Spirit of God dealt in those ancient times with the spirit of man was through TESTIMONY:

> If there be with him an angel,
> An interpreter, one among a thousand,
> To show unto man what is right for him;
> Then He is gracious unto him, and saith,
> Deliver him from going down to the pit,
> I have found a ransom.
> His flesh shall be fresher than a child's;
> He returneth to the days of his youth:
> He prayeth unto God and He is favourable unto him;
> So that he seeth His face with joy:
> And He restoreth unto man his righteousness.

He singeth before men, and saith,
I have sinned, and perverted that which is right,
And it profited me not:
He hath redeemed my soul from going into the pit,
And my life shall behold the light.

If the first method is rare, and the second common, this is the most common; and it succeeds where others have failed. But, in the Revised Version, the reader is put entirely off the track by the translation, which makes the bearer of the testimony an "angel." It is no angel, unless it be the angel which dwells in every good man and woman. The translation of the Authorised Version is correct—"a messenger"—and what makes anyone such a messenger is that he has found the secret for himself. This is the inner compulsion which sends him to the assistance of those who are far from God. There must be in his heart a spark of that love which brought the Son of God down from heaven, to seek and to save that which was lost.

An equally suggestive title borne by the bringer of the testimony is "an interpreter." Elsewhere in Scripture this name is given to the prophets; and to bear the testimony here intended is a truly prophetic function. But the reason for the use of the title here is that the two methods previously tried by God are supposed to have failed. This is why He finds it necessary to resort to another. Even the message of illness may altogether fail to enter the mind for which it is intended, until someone better acquainted than the patient with the ways of Providence appears on the scene and says, "This is what your suffering means." This

is the philosophy of the visitation of the sick, in which so large a portion of the work of the clergy consists.

To interpret thus, however, to those with whom the Spirit of God is dealing, the meaning of their experience is no common gift: on the contrary, he who possesses it is "one among a thousand." Those who try to carry God's message to sinners are few and scattered. Rare even among professing Christians are those who have any real passion for the salvation of the souls of men or put forth any kind of sympathetic effort on their behalf. Is the proportion greatly larger than one in a thousand? Of the thousands of people encountered by any of us on the journey of life, how many have seemed to be really concerned about our salvation or taken any trouble for our awakening? If we can say that two or three have done so we have been more fortunate than the majority. Yet the testimony of man to man is the most effective means employed by the Spirit of God for doing His work in the human soul.

It will be remembered how the exquisite language of v. 23 affected the mind of Bunyan, creating the Interpreter's House, which is nothing but the Church of the living God, as well as the portrait, so incomparably painted, of God's messenger, who was "one of a thousand." But there is pretty satisfactory evidence that this chapter arrested the attention of One far greater than Bunyan. Nothing about any Old Testament passage is so touching as evidence that it fell under the eye of Jesus and awoke reflections in His mind; and this is not want-

ing here. The third attempt to reach the soul is supposed to be effective; and its success is described in several forms. First:

> Then He is gracious unto him, and saith,
> Deliver him from going down into the pit,
> I have found a ransom.

But to every mind this will recall the saying of Jesus about Himself, that the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. Then the result is described again:

> His flesh shall be fresher than a child's;
> He returneth to the days of his youth.

But who could read this without remembering what was said by our Lord to Nicodemus about the new birth? Further on, the person with whom the dealing of the Spirit of God has been successful is made to say, as he looks back on his own past:

> I have sinned, and perverted that which is right,
> And it profited me not.

But, "Father, I have sinned," are the very words put by Jesus into the mouth of the returning Prodigal; and the two lines just quoted may well be the seed out of which the parable of the Prodigal Son was developed.

This poem within a poem is summed up in the words,

> Lo, all these things doth God work,
> Twice, yea thrice, with a man,
> To bring back his soul from the pit,
> That he may be enlightened with the light of the living.

The translation "oftentimes" in the Authorised Version suggested the pleasing reflection that these workings of the Spirit of God on the spirit of man, so remarkably similar to those with which we are familiar ourselves, took place on a large scale even before the Advent; but the more correct translation, "twice, yea thrice," confirms the view we have taken that the poem describes not only the two ways of speaking which fail, but a third, which was effective; and the warmth and expansiveness with which the third is treated confirm the belief that this was the most usual and effective method of the Spirit of God in ancient, as it still is in modern times.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

GENERAL

Bishop Lowth : *De Sacra Poesi Hebræorum Prælectiones Academicæ*, 1753. Reprinted at Oxford, 1821. Translated, 1787.

J. G. Herder : *Vom Geist der Ebräischen Poesie*, 1782-3. Reissued in *Bibliothek theologischer Klassiker*, 1890. Translated 1833.

Ewald : *Die Dichter des alten Bundes*, 1835-9. Translated in part 1880-2.

George Gilfillan : *The Bards of the Bible*, 1850 and many later editions.

Isaac Taylor : *Spirit of Hebrew Poetry*, 1861.

R. G. Moulton : *The Literary Study of the Bible*, 1896.

E. Kautzsch : *Die Poesie und die poetischen Bücher des alten Testaments*, 1902.

A. R. Gordon : *The Poets of the Old Testament*, 1912.

CHAPTER I

G. Buchanan Gray : *The Forms of Hebrew Poetry*, 1915.

S. R. Driver : *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament:* Discussion of *Hebrew Poetry* at the beginning of the chapter on *The Psalms*.

Article by Budde on *Hebrew Poetry* in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. iv.

Article on *Poetical Literature* in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, vol. iii.

F. C. Eiselen, Ch. i., *Hebrew Poetry in the Psalms and other Sacred Writings* (1918).

H. Gunkel in *Die orientalischen Literaturen.*

CHAPTER II

PRINCIPAL SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH : *The Early Poetry of Israel in its Physical and Social Origins*, 1910.

CHAPTER III

Commentaries by HUPFELD, 1853-61 (2nd ed. edited by RIEHM, 1867-71 ; 3rd ed. by NOWACK, 1898), DELITZSCH, PEROWNE, CHEYNE, KIRKPATRICK (Cambridge Bible), W. T. DAVISON and T. W. DAVIES (Century Bible), MACLAREN (Expositor's Bible), BRIGGS (International Critical Commentary), BÄTHGEN, DUHM.

JAMES ROBERTSON : *The Poetry and the Religion of the Psalms.*

W. T. DAVISON : *The Praises of Israel.*

W. G. JORDAN : *Religion in Song, Studies in the Psalter* (*Humanism of the Bible* series).

W. BINNIE : *The Psalms, their Origin, Teachings and Use.*

R. E. PROTHERO : *The Psalms in Human Life.*

CHAPTER IV

Commentaries by LÖHR, CHEYNE (Pulpit Commentary), STREANE (Cambridge Bible), PEAKE (Century Bible).

Translation in M'FADYEN's *Messages of the Psalmists*, (*Messages of the Bible*), and *Wisdom Books in Modern Speech.* Translations of most of the book will be found in A. R. GORDON's *Poets of the Old Testament* (pp. 79-96) ; and of chapters ii. and iv., in SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH's *Jerusalem*, vol. ii., pp. 274-283.

CHAPTER V

Commentaries by DELITZSCH, STRACK, WILDEBOER, TOY (International Critical Commentary series), PEROWNE (Cambridge Bible), HORTON (Expositor's Bible), CURRIE MARTIN (Century Bible).

W. T. DAVISON : *The Wisdom Literature of the Hebrews.*

Bibliography

A. B. DAVIDSON : *The Wisdom of the Hebrews* (in *Biblical and Literary Essays*).

W. ARNOT : *Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth.*

T. K. CHEYNE : *Job and Solomon.*

W. A. L. ELMSLIE : *Studies in Life from Jewish Proverbs* (*Humanism of the Bible* series).

C. F. KENT : *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and their Proverbs.*

CHAPTER VI

Commentaries by DELITZSCH, SIEGFRIED, GINSBURG, BARTON (International Critical Commentary), Cox (Expositor's Bible), PLUMPTRE (Cambridge Bible), CURRIE MARTIN (Century Bible).

CHEYNE and DAVISON as in preceding chapter.

T. C. FINLAYSON : *Meditations and Maxims of Koheleth.*

GENUNG : *Ecclesiastes and Omar Khayyam.*

CHAPTER VII

Commentaries by HERRMANN, NOWACK, C. H. H. WRIGHT, Cox, THATCHER (Century Bible), R. A. WATSON (Expositor's Bible), G. A. COOKE (Cambridge Bible).

ARMSTRONG BLACK : *Ruth, a Hebrew Idyl.*

CHAPTER VIII

Commentaries by DILLMANN, BUDDE, DUHM, Cox, A. B. DAVIDSON (Cambridge Bible), A. S. PEAKE (Century Bible), J. STRAHAN.

E. J. DILLON : *Sceptics of the Old Testament.*

J. E. MCFADYEN : *The Problem of Pain—A Study in the Book of Job* (*Humanism of the Bible* series).

C. F. AKED : *The Divine Drama of Job* (*Short Course* series).

Essays on Job by FROUDE, MOZLEY, GODET, E. CAIRD, A. M. FAIRBAIRN.

CHAPTER IX

Commentaries by BUDDE, SIEGFRIED, GINSBURG, A. HARPER (Cambridge Bible), G. CURRIE MARTIN (Century Bible), ADENEY (Expositor's Bible).

D. R. SCOTT: *Pessimism and Love in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs* (*Humanism of the Bible* series)

CHAPTER X

Articles in works on Hebrew Archæology, such as those of RIEHM, BENZINGER, NOWACK.

SIR JOHN STAINER: *The Music of the Bible.*

J. WEISS: *Die musikalischen Instrumente in den heiligen Schriften des alten Testaments.*

The translation in the Revised Version or in the American Standard Version is, in these poetical parts of Scripture, an immense improvement on that in the Authorised Version. A profusion of suggested changes—many of them excellent—will be found in *The Holy Bible with Various Renderings and Readings*, where the Old Testament part is early work of Professors CHEYNE and DRIVER. In the *Kautzsch-Weizsäcker Bibel* the translations are by various hands—some of them skilful—and PROFESSOR MCFADYEN has undertaken singlehanded the praiseworthy task of doing for the Old Testament what Weymouth and Moffatt have done for the New; the Psalms and the Wisdom Books, translated by him, being already published as *The Psalms* and *The Wisdom Books in Modern Speech.* Translations by RENAN, DUHM and SIR GEORGE ADAM SMITH are, when available, worthy of special attention.

The articles on the various books in the Bible Dictionaries (Imperial, Hastings', Schaff-Hauck, Biblica), as well as the chapters in the works on Introduction (CORNILL, WILDEBOER, KÖNIG, DRIVER, MCFADYEN, GRAY, *Book by Book*) are frequently of high value.

INDEX

The Beauty of the Bible

BILLING AND SONS, LTD., PRINTERS, GUILDFORD, ENGLAND

A CATALOGUE OF THEOLOGICAL, ILLUSTRATED AND GENERAL BOOKS PUBLISHED BY JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET, LONDON, E.C.

CLASSIFIED ACCORDING TO PRICES,
WITH INDEX OF TITLES AND AUTHORS AT THE END.

New Books and New Editions Marked with an Asterisk.

12/6 net

The Marprelate Tracts. By WILLIAM PIERCE, Author of "An Historical Introduction to the Marprelate Tracts." Demy 8vo, cloth, 12s. 6d. net.

The "Tracts" reprinted in this volume are among the most famous in history. They were read eagerly everywhere in England, from the Court to the country farmhouse, when they appeared at the end of the sixteenth century. They are racy in style, and the unknown author, "Martin Marprelate," brings great resources of wit, humour and argument to bear in his tremendous onslaught upon the Bishops. Mr. Pierce gives a very scholarly edition of the tracts, enriched by many valuable and illuminating notes.

Dr. JAMES MOFFATT, in *The British Weekly*, says :—" Will rank as a standard edition. It is not possible to convey any idea of the historical scholarship and research which have gone to the making of this book, but Mr. Pierce will have his reward in the consciousness of serving the cause of religious liberty; and in the gratification of those who have to study the religious situation of England during the sixteenth century. . . . Their historical importance is considerable."

" One of the most valuable contributions to our history ever made."
Principal W. B. SELBIE.

10/6 net

THE POLYCHROME BIBLE

A New English Translation of the Books of the Bible. Printed in various colours, showing at a glance the composite nature and the different sources of the Books. With many Notes and Illustrations from Ancient Monuments, &c. Each volume is the work of an eminent Biblical scholar of Europe or America, and the whole work is under the general editorship of PAUL HAUPT, of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, assisted by HORACE HOWARD FURNESS.

The Book of Ezekiel. Translated by the Rev. C. H. TOY, D.D., LL.D., Professor of Hebrew and other Oriental Languages, and Lecturer on Biblical Literature in Harvard University. 208 pp. (89 pp. translation and 119 pp. notes). With nine full-page Illustrations (including a Map of Western Asia) and 102 Illustrations in the Notes. Cloth, gilt top, 10s. 6d. net.

For other Volumes in this Series see page 4.

10/6 net (*continued*)

***Evolution of Latin Christianity.** By JAMES HERON, D.D., Professor of Ecclesiastical History, Belfast. Author of "The Church of the Apostolic Age," etc. Demy 8vo, cloth boards, 10s. 6d. net.

7/6 net

The Meaning and Value of Mysticism. By E. HERMAN, Author of "Eucken and Bergson." Second Edition. Demy 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 7s. 6d. net.

A Chronicle of the Archbishops of Canterbury. By A. E. MCKILLIAM, M.A. Demy 8vo. Photogravure Portrait and 16 illustrations. Cloth boards, gilt tops, 7s. 6d. net.

Christ's Vision of the Kingdom of Heaven. By JAMES STIRLING. Author of "The Stewardship of Life," "Finders of the Way," etc. Demy 8vo. Cloth boards, gilt top, 7s. 6d. net.

Hampstead: Its Historic Houses; Its Literary and Artistic Associations. By ANNA MAXWELL. Large foolscap 4to. Cloth boards gilt top. Four illustrations in colour and 32 full-page illustrations. 7s. 6d. net.

A History of the United States. By JOHN FISKE, Litt.D., LL.D. For Schools. With Topical Analysis, Suggestive Questions and Directions for Teachers, by FRANK ALPINE HILL, Litt.D., formerly Headmaster of the English High School in Cambridge, and later of the Mechanic Arts High School in Boston. With 180 illustrations and 39 Maps. Crown 8vo, half leather, gilt top, 7s. 6d. net.

6/- net

THE POLYCHROME BIBLE

The Book of Joshua. Translated by the Rev. W. H. BENNETT, M.A., Litt.D., Principal of Lancashire Independent College, Manchester, formerly Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge. 94 pp., printed in nine colours (43 pp. translation and 51 pp. notes, including an illustrated Excursus on the Tel-el-Amarna Tablets and a List of Geographical Names). Eleven full-page Illustrations (one in colours) and 25 Illustrations in the Notes. Cloth, gilt top, 6s. net.

The Book of Judges. Translated with Notes, by G. F. MOORE, D.D., Professor of Hebrew in Andover Theological Seminary, 98 pp., printed in seven colours (42 pp. translation, 56 pp. notes). Seven full-page Illustrations (including a Map in colours and 20 Illustrations in the Notes). Cloth, gilt top, price 6s. net.

For other Volumes in this Series see page 3.

6/- net (*continued*)

***Isaiah in Modern Speech.** By J. E. McFADYEN, D.D. Author of "The Wisdom Books in Modern Speech," "The Psalms in Modern Speech," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s. net.

***The Unspeakable Gift, and other Sermons.** By PRINCIPAL E. GRIFFITH-JONES, D.D., author of "Faith and Verification," etc. Large crown 8vo, 6s. net.

The Wisdom Books (Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes). Also Lamentations and the Song of Songs in Modern Speech and Rhythmical Form. By JOHN EDGAR McFADYEN, D.D. Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow. Author of "The Psalms in Modern Speech," "The Messages of the Psalmists," "The Problem of Pain," etc. Large Crown 8vo., cloth boards, 6s. net.

The Christian World Pulpit. Half-Yearly Volumes, cloth boards, 6s. net.

"A notable collection of the utterances of Protestant preachers on a wide variety of subjects which many people will rejoice to ponder at leisure."—*The Glasgow Herald.*

The Person of Christ in Modern Thought. By E. DIGGES LA TOUCHE, M.A., Litt.D. Donnellan Lecturer 1911-1912, Author of "Christian Certitude," etc. Demy 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 6s. net.

"A full and exhaustive treatment. . . Dr. Digges La Touche has produced a valuable introduction to the study of Christological speculation of the Modern Period, as well as an apologia for the less fashionable confessional Christology of the sixteenth century."—*The Commonwealth.*

"A book of considerable immediate service. . . There is no side of the subject unvisited."—*Expository Times.*

Through Science to Faith. By DR. NEWMAN SMYTH, Author of "The Place of Death in Evolution," "Old Faiths in New Lights," "The Reality of Faith," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, 6s. net.

"We commend Dr. Smyth's work to the attention of all thoughtful readers."—*Liverpool Mercury.*

America in the East. By WILLIAM ELLIOT GRIFFIS, formerly of the Imperial University of Japan, Author of "The Mikado's Empire," "Corea, the Hermit Nation," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth, gilt top, with 19 Illustrations, 6s. net.

"We need hardly say that there is much that is interesting in the book."—*Spectator.*

Rev. T. T. Lynch: A Memoir. Edited by WILLIAM WHITE. With Portrait. Crown 8vo, cloth, 6s. net.

6/- net (*continued*)

Faith and Verification. With Other Studies in Christian Thought and Life. By PRINCIPAL E. GRIFFITH-JONES, D.D. Large crown 8vo. with Photogravure Portrait, cloth boards, gilt top, 6s. net.

The House of the Secret. By KATHARINE TYNAN, Author of "For Maisie," "Her Ladyship," &c. Large crown 8vo. Illustrated. Cloth boards, 6s.

"Miss Katharine Tynan can always be depended upon for a good story told in a quiet and charming manner. As ever, it has a well-developed and well-constructed plot. We have thoroughly enjoyed this excellent story, and can recommend it very strongly."—*Bookman.*

The Story of Clarice. By KATHARINE TYNAN. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s.

"A story which is on a level with the best Miss Tynan has yet written. It is quiet and simple. We like 'The Story of Clarice,' and its reasonableness and soundness mark it out for popularity."—*Morning Post.*

Friend Olivia. By AMELIA E. BARR. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s.

THE HUMANISM OF THE BIBLE SERIES

Edited by PROFESSOR JOHN E. MCFADYEN, B.A. (Oxon), D.D. (United Free Church College, Glasgow), and D. RUSSELL SCOTT, M.A., (Late Pusey and Ellerton Hebrew Scholar in the University of Oxford). Large Crown 8vo. Cloth Gilt. Price 3s. 6d. net per Volume. The aim of the Series is to set forth the human experience that underlies, and is reflected in, the Bible. The doctrinal and theological treatment of the Bible has undoubtedly tended to obscure its transcendent human interest. This Series is an attempt to recover some of those ancient experiences and personalities which come to expression in the Bible, and to show how fascinating and relevant they are to the life of to-day. It seeks in a broad way to interpret the spirit of the Biblical books with which it deals, and to indicate their permanent human interest and worth.

Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s. net.

"If the series may be judged by its first volume it promises to fulfil admirably its purpose of making the Bible a more human book."—*Glasgow Herald.*

***The Beauty of the Bible.** A study of its Poets and Poetry. By PROF. JAMES STALKER, D.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 6s.

Pessimism and Love in Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs, with translations from the same. By DAVID RUSSELL SCOTT, M.A.

"An able and exhaustive analysis and explanation of Ecclesiastes. The book teems with valuable instructions for man of to-day."—*Liverpool Courier.*

6/- net (*continued*)

The Individuality of S. Paul. By R. H. STRACHAN, M.A.

"Every page bears evidence of painstaking research. The volume will prove of signal value to the student."—*Aberdeen Daily Journal.*

Religion in Song: Studies in the Psalter. By PROF. W. G. JORDAN, B.A., D.D.

This is a most fascinating volume, eminently wise and helpful. To the preacher it is a veritable gold mine, while apart altogether from its religious power and insight it is a literary treat.

The Problem of Pain. A Study in the book of Job. By PROFESSOR JOHN E. MCFADYEN, D.D.

". . . . could have no better guide than this careful and masterly exposition, as noteworthy for its literary merit and sympathetic feeling as for its sound scholarship."—*Scotsman.*

Studies in Life from Jewish Proverbs. By W. A. L. ELMSLIE, M.A., Fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge.

Jesus and Life. By PROFESSOR JOSEPH F. MCFADYEN, M.A. Hislop College, Nagpur, India.

5/- net

Getting Together. Essays by Friends in Council on the Regulative Ideas of Religioue Thought. Edited by JAMES MORRIS WHITON, Ph.D. (Yale). Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 5s. net.

Charles Darwin and other English Thinkers. With reference to their Religious and Ethical value. By S. PARKES CADMAN, D.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 5s. net.

John Smith the Se-Baptist, Thomas Helwys, and the First Baptist Church in England. By WALTER H. BURGESS, B.A. Large crown 8vo, cloth, 5s. net.

The Private Relationships of Christ. By T. VINCENT TYMMS, D.D. Author of "The Mystery of God," "The Christian Idea of Atonement," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 5s. net.

Theology and Truth. By NEWTON H. MARSHALL, M.A., Ph.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 5s. net.

"The book is masterly both in constructive power and in exposition. . . . It is a book which ought to be widely read."—*Aberdeen Free Press.*

The Growing Revelation. By AMORY H. BRADFORD, D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth, 5s. net.

5/- net (*continued*)

***The Rosebud Annual for 1918.** The Ideal Book for the Nursery. Four Coloured Plates and printed in colour throughout. Coloured paper boards, varnished, 5s.
"A rich fund of enjoyment for the nursery."—*Aberdeen Free Press.*

The New Testament in Modern Speech. With notes. An idiomatic translation into everyday English from the text of "The Resultant Greek Testament." By the late RICHARD FRANCIS WEYMOUTH, M.A., D.Litt., Fellow of University College, London, and formerly Head Master of Mill Hill School, Editor of "The Resultant Greek Testament." Edited and partly revised by ERNEST HAMPDEN-COOK, M.A., formerly Exhibitioner and Prizeman of St. John's College, Cambridge. New and revised Edition. Cloth boards, 5s. net. Leather 7s. 6d. net. Thumb Indexed, cloth, 6s. net. Leather 8s. 6d. net. Also on Oxford India paper, cloth boards, 6s. 6d. net. Leather, 8s. 6d. net. (*See also p.* 20.)

4/6 net

***Problems of To-morrow.** Social, Moral and Religious. Edited by F. A. REES. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

The Spiritual Pilgrimage of Jesus: The Bruce Lectures, 1917. By JAMES ALEXANDER ROBERTSON, M.A. With Introduction by PROF. JAMES MOFFATT, D.D. Third edition. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

Philippians. Expository Sermons on the Epistle of St. Paul. By DAVID BURNS. Author of "The Song of the Well," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards 4s. 6d. net.

The Psalms in Modern Speech and Rhythmical Form. By JOHN EDGAR MCFADYEN, D.D., Professor of Old Testament Language, Literature, and Theology, United Free Church College, Glasgow, Author of "The Messages of the Psalmists," "Studies in the Psalms," "Introduction to the Old Testament," etc. Second Edition. Large Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt, 4s. 6d. net.

In the Father's House: the People's Prayer and Praise. By H. JEFFS, Author of "The Art of Sermon Illustration," "The Art of Exposition," etc. Large Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt, 4s. 6d. net.

Dante For the People. Selected Passages from the Divine Comedy in English Verse. By GAUNTLETT CHAPLIN. Large Crown 8vo. Cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

J. B. Paton, M.A., D.D., Educational and Social Pioneer. By JAMES MARCHANT. Large crown 8vo, Photogravure Portrait, and Illustrations on Art Paper, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

4/6 net (*continued*)

Life's Beginnings. Wisdom and Counsel for Daily Guidance. Fifth impression. Printed on India paper and handsomely bound in leather, round corners and gilt edges, 4s. 6d. net (uniform with "The Pilot"). Also in silk grain cloth, 3s. net.

"One can easily understand how a compendium of the thoughts of master minds such as this may be a real stimulus in these days of stress. The battle of the world will be entered upon with a cheerful heart after a thoughtful perusal of the most noble passages allotted to each day by these discriminating anthologists. Should be in constant demand. One of the prettiest and most acceptable gift-books this busy season has seen."
Dundee Advertiser.

The Pilot. A Book of Daily Guidance from Master Minds. Contains nearly 2,000 of the choicest extracts systematically arranged for every day of the year. Printed on India paper and handsomely bound in leather, with round corners and gilt edges, 4s. 6d. net.

"A book of real daily value."—*Sheffield Telegraph.*

Ungilded Gold; or, Nuggets from the King's Treasury. Selected Passages from the Bible, arranged for Daily Devotional Reading (uniform with "The Pilot"). 384 pages, leather, 4s. 6d. net; also silk grain cloth, gilt lettering, red edges, 3s. net.

Reconstruction: A Help to Doubters. By ROBERT F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., Author of "My Belief," "Oliver Cromwell," etc. Large Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

"J.B." J. Brierley, his Life and Work. By H. JEFFS, Author of "The Art of Exposition," "Portrait Preaching," "Concerning Conscience," etc. Large Crown 8vo, Photogravure and other Portraits, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

Selections from Brierley. ("J.B." of "The Christian World"), Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

Portrait Preaching. Studies in Bible Characters. By H. JEFFS, Author of "The Art of Exposition," "The Art of Sermon Illustration," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

My Daily Meditation for the Circling Year. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D., Author of "Things that Matter Most," "The Passion for Souls," &c. Handsomely bound in cloth boards, gilt edges, with headband and marker, 4s. 6d. net.

Advent Sermons. Discourses on the First and Second Coming of Christ. By W. E. ORCHARD, D.D., Author of "Sermons on God, Christ and Man." Large Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

4/6 net (*continued*)

Effectual Words. Sermons that led to Christ. Compiled by JOHN REID, M.A., Author of "The First Things of Jesus," "The Uplifting of Life," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top. 4s. 6d. net.

Things that Matter Most. Short Devotional Readings. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D. Author of "The Transfigured Church," "Sharing His Sufferings," "The Passion for Souls," etc. Handsomely bound in cloth, gilt edges, with headband and marker, 4s. 6d. net.

Sermons on God, Christ and Man. By W. E. ORCHARD, D.D. Author of "Modern Theories of Sin," "The Evolution of Old Testament Religion." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

Illustrations from Art for Pulpit and Platform. By REV. JAMES BURNS, M.A. Author of "Sermons in Art." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

The Unfettered Word. A Series of Readings for the quiet hour. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D. Author of "The Gospel of Grace," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

Concerning Conscience. Studies in Practical Ethics. By H. JEFFS. Author of "The Art of Sermon Illustration," "Practical Lay Preaching and Speaking to Men," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

Spoken Words of Prayer and Praise. A Book of Prayers. By S. A. TIPPLE. Author of "Days of Old," "Sunday Mornings at Norwood," etc. Cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

Days of Old, and other Sermons. By S. A. TIPPLE, Author of "Sunday Mornings at Norwood." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

The Transfigured Church. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D., Author of "The Passion for Souls," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

The Art of Exposition. By H. JEFFS, Author of "The Art of Sermon Illustration," "Practical Lay Preaching," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

A Working Woman's Life. The Autobiography of MARIANNE FARNINGHAM. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

The Gospel of Grace. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D., Author of "Christ's Pathway to the Cross," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

4/6 net (*continued*)

Life in His Name. By DAVID M. M'INTYRE, Author of "The Hidden Life of Prayer," &c. Handsomely bound in cloth boards, gilt edges, with headband and marker, 4s. 6d. net.

Modern Theories of Sin. By W. E. ORCHARD, D.D. Thesis approved for the Degree of Doctor of Divinity in the University of London. Demy 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

The Art of Sermon Illustration. By H. JEFFS, Editor of *The Christian World Pulpit*. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

The First Things of Jesus. By JOHN REID, M.A., of Inverness, Author of "Jesus and Nicodemus: a Study in Spiritual Life." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

The Evolution of Old Testament Religion. By W. E. ORCHARD, D.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.

My Belief. Answers to Certain Religious Difficulties. By R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D., Author of "Cartoons of St. Mark," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

THE MESSAGES OF THE BIBLE

Edited by FRANK KNIGHT SANDERS, Ph.D., Woolsey Professor of Biblical Literature in Yale University, and CHARLES FOSTER KENT, Ph.D., Professor of Biblical Literature and History in Brown University. Super royal 16mo, cloth, red top, 4s. 6d. net per volume (To be completed in 12 Volumes.)

I. THE MESSAGES OF THE EARLIER PROPHETS. By Frank Knight Sanders, Ph.D., and Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D.

II. THE MESSAGES OF THE LATER PROPHETS. By Frank Knight Sanders, Ph.D., and Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D.

III. THE MESSAGES OF ISRAEL'S LAW-GIVERS. By Charles Foster Kent, Ph.D.

IV. THE MESSAGES OF THE PROPHETICAL AND PRIESTLY HISTORIANS. By John Edgar McFadyen, M.A.(Glas.), B.A.(Oxon.)

V. THE MESSAGES OF THE PSALMISTS. By John Edgar McFadyen, M.A.(Glas.), B.A.(Oxon).

VII. THE MESSAGES OF THE POETS. By Nathaniel Schmidt, M.A.

VIII. THE MESSAGES OF THE APOCALYPTICAL WRITERS. By Frank Chamberlin Porter, Ph.D., D.D.

IX. THE MESSAGES OF JESUS ACCORDING TO THE SYNOPTISTS. By Thomas Cuming Hall, D.D.

4/6 net (*continued*)

MESSAGES OF THE BIBLE (*continued*)

X. The Messages of Jesus according to the Gospel of John. By James Stevenson Riggs, D.D.

XI. The Messages of Paul. By George Barker Stevens, Ph.D., D.D.

XII. The Messages of the Apostles. By George Barker Stevens, Ph.D., D.D.

Volume VI. will appear shortly.

"Such a work is of the utmost service to every student of the Scriptures."
The Dundee Advertiser.

By J. BRIERLEY ("J. B.")

Faith's Certainties. By J. Brierley ("J.B."), Author of "Religion and To-day," "Ourselves and the Universe," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

Religion and To-day. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.

The Life of the Soul. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"Vigorous in thought, rich in literary allusions, and incisive in style. . . Mr. Brierley is always convincing as well as ingenious."—*Methodist Recorder.*

The Secret of Living. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 4s. 6d. net.
"This author has given several thoughtful volumes, but not one in which the ideal and the practical are so well blended and so skilfully contrasted as in the present."—*Liverpool Courier.*

Life and the Ideal. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"This book is a book to read, and each section is food for constant reference and continued thought."—*Manchester Courier.*

Aspects of the Spiritual. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"These essays are equal to the best he has yet produced. They cover an immense variety of subjects."—*Daily News.*

Sidelights on Religion. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"Delightfully optimistic, a description which sums up as a whole this very interesting and helpful volume. It deserves to be widespread."
Pall Mall Gazette.

Religion and Experience. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"This book is quite worthy to be placed alongside of Mr. Brierley's best work."—*Daily News.*

The Eternal Religion. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"Well written and helpful."—*The Times.*

The Common Life. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"A book which every minister ought to possess."—*British Weekly.*

Problems of Living. Third Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"These beautiful and charming essays."—*Hibbert Journal.*

4/6 net (*continued*)

By J. BRIERLY ("J. B.")—(*cont*).

Ourselves and the Universe: Studies in Life and Religion. Sixth Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 4s. 6d. net.
"We have not for a long time read a brighter, cheerier, or wiser book."
Daily News.

Studies of the Soul. Eighth Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 4s. 6d.
DR. HORTON says:—"I prefer this book to the best-written books I have lighted on for a year past."

Our City of God. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 4s. 6d. net.
"We say without hesitation that this is a most inspiring work."
Westminster Gazette.

3/9 net

The New Testament in Modern Speech. By the late RICHARD FRANCIS WEYMOUTH, M.A., D.Litt. Pocket Edition (without notes), cloth boards, 3s. 9d. net. Also on Oxford India paper, cloth boards, round corners, gilt edges, 4s. 6d. net. (*See also p.* 16.)

3/6 net

Dr. Isabel Mitchell, of Manchuria. By F. W. S. O'NEILL. Third edition. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

Under the Shadow of God. By H. W. MORROW, M.A. Author of "War and Immortality," etc. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

A Gamble with Life. By SILAS K. HOCKING, Author of "To Pay the Price." Large crown 8vo, bevelled boards, 3s. 6d.

The Great Unfolding. Notes on the Revelation. By Colonel G. J. VAN SOMEREN, Indian Army (retired), Author of "Babylon: Past, Present and Future." Large Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Saint Paul's Fight for Galatia. By C. H. WATKINS, M.A., D.Th. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top. 3s. 6d. net.

Constructive Natural Theology. By Dr. NEWMAN SMYTH. Author of "Through Science to Faith," "The Reality of Faith," etc. Cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

Saint Paul and His Cities. By R. W. POUNDER, Author of "Historical Notes on the Book of Revelation." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

The Song of the Well, and other Sermons. By DAVID BURNS. Author of "Sayings in Symbol." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

3/6 net (*continued*)

Until the Day Dawn. The New Testament Basis for a Doctrine of Inspiration. By Rev. J. Puleston Jones, M.A. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Heaven and the Sea. By Frank Elias. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 16 Illustrations from classical paintings, 3s. 6d. net.

Voices of To-Day: Studies of Representative Modern Preachers. By Hugh Sinclair. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

What is the Bible? A Modern Survey. By J. Warschauer, M.A., D.Phil., Author of "Jesus: Seven Questions," "Problems of Immanence," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

The Wisdom of God and the Word of God. By W. Harvey-Jellie, M.A., B.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

Christ or Chaos? By E. S. Watson ("Deas Cromarty"). Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

Heavenly Visions. Studies in the Book of Revelation. By Rev. Charles Brown, Author of "Letters of Christ," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Westminster Sermons. Dean H. Hensley Henson, formerly of S. Margaret's, Westminster. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Religion and Miracle. By George A. Gordon, D.D., Author of "Through Man to God," "The Christ of To-day," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

The Winning of Immortality. By Frederic Palmer, Author of "Studies in Theologic Definition." Cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Christian Certitude: Its Intellectual Basis. By E. Digges La Touche, Litt.D. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Interludes in a Time of Change: Ethical, Social, Theological. By James Morris Whiton, Ph.D. (Yale), Author of "Divine Satisfaction," "Gloria Patri," &c. Cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Evangelical Heterodoxy. By J. Morgan Gibbon, Author of "The Epistle to the Galatians." Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

3/6 net (*continued*)

The Christian of To-day. A Brief Description of His Thought and Life. By ROBERT VEITCH, M.A., Author of "The First Christians," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey. By E. E. CLEAL. Demy 8vo, 464 pages, 46 Illustrations on art paper and Map, cloth bevelled boards, 3s. 6d. net.

Jesus and His Teaching. By ERICH VON SCHRENCK, Mag. Theol. Translated by J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., D.Phil. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

The Atonement in Modern Thought. A Theological Symposium. By Professor AUGUSTE SABATIER, Professor HARNACK, Professor GODET, Dean FARRAR, Dr. P. T. FORSYTH, Dr. MARCUS DODS, Dr. LYMAN ABBOTT, Dr. JOHN HUNTER, Dr. WASHINGTON GLADDEN, Dean FREMANTLE, Dr. CAVE, Dr. R. F. HORTON, Rev. R. J. CAMPBELL, Principal ADENEY, Rev. C. SILVESTER HORNE, Rev. BERNARD J. SNELL, and Dr. T. T. MUNGER. Cheap Edition. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

"This interesting work. . . . Among the writers are men of great distinction. . . . Deserves careful attention."—*The Spectator.*

A Voice from China. By GRIFFITH JOHN, D.D.Edin., Hankow. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. 6d. net.

The Story of the English Baptists. By J. C. CARLILE. Large crown 8vo, 320 pages, 8 Illustrations on art paper, 3s. 6d. net.

The First Christians; or, Christian Life in New Testament Times. By ROBERT VEITCH, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. 6d. net.

Gloria Patri: or, Our Talks About the Trinity. By J. M. WHITON, Ph.D. (Yale). Cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

The Christ that is To Be: A Latter-Day Romance. By Sir J. COMPTON-RICKETT, M.P. New Edition. Demy 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

Preaching to the Times. By Dean H. HENSLEY HENSON. Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. net.

"Sound sense and scholarly solidity."—*Dundee Courier.*

The Dutch in the Medway. By CHARLES MACFARLANE. Author of "The Camp of Refuge," &c. With a Foreword by S. R. CROCKETT. Crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

3/6 net *(continued)*

The Quickening of Caliban. A Modern Story of Evolution. By Sir J. COMPTON-RICKETT, M.P., Author of "Christianity in Common Speech," &c. Large crown 8vo, cloth, 3s. 6d. net.

AMELIA E. BARR'S NOVELS

Crown 8vo, cloth extra, 3s. 6d. net.

The Beads of Tasmer.
The Last of the Mac Allisters.
The Squire of Sandal Side.
A Border Shepherdess.

3/- net

***Christ's View of the Kingdom of God.** By W. MANSON, M.A. Crown 8vo, 192 pp., cloth boards, 3s. net.

***The Decoration of the Cross.** By JOHN A. PATTEN, M.A. Crown 8vo, 192 pp., cloth boards, 3s. net.

The Personality of Jesus. By CHARLES H. BARROWS. Large crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. net.

School Hymns, for Schools and Missions. With Music. Compiled by E. H. MAYO GUNN. Harmonies Revised by ELLIOTT BUTTON. Large Imp. 16mo, 3s. net.

A Pulpit Manual. Containing Prayers of Adoration, Confession, Petition, Thanksgiving, and Intercession; Suggestive Summaries; Orders of Service for Sacraments, Marriage, Admission to Communion, Church Festivals, and other Public Occasions. Compiled by JAMES BURNS, M.A., Author of "Illustrations from Art for Pulpit and Platform." Crown 8vo, cloth boards. 3s. net.

Messages of Hope. By GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E. Author of "Thoughts for Life's Journey," &c. Handsomely bound in cloth boards, gilt edges, 3s. net; leather, 5s. net.

Problems and Perplexities. By W. E. ORCHARD, D.D., Author of "Modern Theories of Sin," "Evolution of Old Testament Religion," etc. 304 pages, printed on India paper, cloth boards, 3s. net.

Thoughts for Life's Journey. By GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., Author of "Leaves for Quiet Hours." Cheap Edition. Cloth boards, gilt edges, 3s. net.

Things Most Surely Believed. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D., Author of "The Gospel of Grace," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. net.

Conquering Prayer: or, The Power of Personality. By L. SWETENHAM, Author of "Religious Genius." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. net.

3/- net (*continued*)

Leaves for Quiet Hours. By GEORGE MATHESON, F.R.S.E., D.D., LL.D., Author of "Words by the Wayside," &c. New and cheap edition. Handsomely bound in cloth boards, with chaste design in gold, and gilt edges, 3s. net. Leather, 5s. net.

Life's Beginnings. Wisdom and Counsel for Daily Guidance. Silk grain cloth, 3s. net. Also printed on India paper and handsomely bound in leather, round corners and gilt edges, 4s. 6d. net (uniform with "The Pilot").

"An admirable compilation. The authors have read widely and their selections from modern religious writers are made with taste and judgment. A very attractive and helpful little book."—*British Weekly.*

Ungilded Gold; or, Nuggets from the King's Treasury. Selected Passages from the Bible, arranged for Daily Devotional Reading (uniform with "The Pilot"). 384 pages, silk grain cloth, gilt lettering, red edges, 3s. net; leather, 4s. 6d. net.

The Glorious Company of the Apostles. Being Studies in the Characters of the Twelve. By the Rev. J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D. Cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. net.

"Many think that a readable sermon is a contradiction in terms. Let them read these pages and discover their mistake."—*Examiner.*

The Model Prayer. A Series of Expositions on the Lord's Prayer. By Rev. J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D. New Edition, cloth boards, gilt top, 3s. net.

"Mr. Jones brings a cultured mind, a well-stored memory, and a gift of spiritual insight to the illustration of the Lord's Prayer."
Sunday School Chronicle.

Eucken and Bergson. Their Significance for Christian Thought. By E. HERMAN. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 3s. net.

2/6 net

Christ; and the World at War. Sermons in War-Time. Edited by BASIL MATHEWS, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

A New Spiritual Impulse; or, Pentecost To-day. By L. SWETENHAM. Author of "Conquering Prayer," "War: The Cross of the Nations," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d.

Progress of the Soul. By S. LAW WILSON, M.A., D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

War and Immortality. By H. W. MORROW, M.A., Author of "Questions asked and answered by our Lord," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt, 2s. 6d. net.

2/6 net (*continued*)

Through a Padre's Spectacles. By J. Golder Burns, C.F. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt, 2s. 6d. net.

Poems. By Madame Guyon. Translated from the French by the late William Cowper, with a Prefatory Essay by D. Macfadyen, M.A. F'cap 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Appeal of Jesus. By T. S. Cairncross, B.D., Author of "The Making of a Minister," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Chosen Twelve. By James Golder Burns, B.D., of Glasgow. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Simon Peter's Ordination Day. Studies in the Twenty-first Chapter of St. John's Gospel. By the Rev. John A. Patten, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Ambrose Shepherd, D.D. A Memoir and Sermons. Written by Eric Shepherd. Edited by J. F. Shepherd, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, with Portrait, 2s. 6d. net.

The Making of a Minister. By T. S. Cairncross, B.D., Author of "Steps of the Pulpit." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Seriousness of Life. Sermons on Practical Subjects, with an Essay on Preaching. By James S. Rutherford, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards. 2s. 6d. net.

Through Eyes of Youth. A Book of Poems. By E. Cecil Roberts, Author of "Phyllistrata, and other Poems." Crown 8vo, cloth boards. 2s. 6d. net.

Homes and Careers in Canada. By H. Jeffs, Author of "The Good New Times," etc. 16 Illustrations on art paper. Crown 8vo, cloth boards. 2s. 6d. net.

Christian Union in Social Service. By J. C. Carlile, Author of "The Story of the English Baptists," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Self-Realisation. By C. H. Betts, LL.D., Author of "Fragments of Thought," "The Education of a Soul," "Living Pleasures," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Who was Jesus? The Answer of the New Testament. By D. H. Maconachie, B.A., B.D. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Translation of Faith. By H. Bulcock, B.A., B.D. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Studies in Christian Mysticism. By Rev. W. H. Dyson. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

2/6 net (*continued*)

Astronomy Simplified. By Rev. Alex. C. Henderson, B.D., F.R.A.S. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Phyllistrata, and other Poems. By E. Cecil Roberts. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Our Protestant Faith. By Rev. J. Stephens Roose, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Story of the Twelve: A Dramatic Poem in eight books. By Arthur Hay Storrow. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 2s. 6d. net.

The Waiting Life: By the River of Waters. By Hubert Foston, M.A., D.Lit. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Uplifting of Life. By Rev. John Reid, M.A., Author of "The First Things of Jesus," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Unveiled Glory; or, Sidelights on the Higher Evolution. By Rev. Luther Winther Caws, Author of "The Unrecognised Stranger, "The Unfolding Dawn." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Looking Inwards: Words Addressed to the Soul of the Church. By Edward Shillito, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Imperishable Word. By W. Charter Piggott. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Constructive Christianity. By William Souper, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Peter in the Firelight. By William Allen Knight, Author of "Our Syrian Guest," "No Room in the Inn," etc. Illustrated in Colours. Fancy Cover. Large crown 8vo, 2s. 6d. net.

A Young Man's Ideal. By William Watson, M.A., Author of "Prayer," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Modern Minor Prophets. Edited, with a Chapter on "Lay Preaching and its By-Products," by H. Jeffs, Author of "The Art of Sermon Illustration," "Practical Lay Preaching and Speaking to Men." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Fifty Years' Reminiscences of a Free Church Musician. By E. Minshall. Crown 8vo, Photogravure Portrait, 2s. 6d. net.

Problems of Immanence. Studies Critical and Constructive. By J. Warschauer, M.A., D.Phil., Author of "The New Evangel," "Jesus: Seven Questions," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

2/6 net (*continued*)

Sculptors of Life. A Book for Young Men and Young Women. By THOMAS YATES. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

An Impregnable Faith. A Modern Pilgrim's Progress from Scepticism through Morality and Religious Optimism to Jesus Christ and the "Good Kingdom." By Rev. DAVID MELVILLE STEWART. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

A Lifted Veil. A Novel. By J. G. STEVENSON. Cheap Edition. Crown 8vo, 4 Illustrations, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Augustinian Revolution in Theology. By Rev. THOMAS ALLIN, D.D., Author of "Race and Religion." Illustrated by Comparison with the Teaching of the Antiochene Divines of the Fourth and Fifth Centuries. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Beatitudes and the Contrasts. By HUBERT FOSTON, M.A., D. Litt. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

King George and Queen Mary. By HENRY WARWICK. Illustrated by latest portraits on art paper. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Letters to a Ministerial Son. By A MAN OF THE WORLD. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Religion: The Quest of the Ideal. By J. M. HODGSON, M.A., D.Sc., D.D. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The Universal Over-Presence. By C. H. BETTS, Author of "Fragments of Thought" and "The Education of a Soul." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The True Christ, and other Studies in "Whatsoever things are true." By W. L. WALKER, Author of "The Teaching of Christ," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Christ in Everyday Life. By EDWARD INCREASE BOSWORTH, Dean of Oberlin Theological Seminary. F'cap 8vo, India paper, cloth boards, round corners, 2s. 6d. net.

Lyrics of the Soul. A Book of Poems. By MARIANNE FARNINGHAM, Author of "Harvest Gleanings," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt edges, 2s. 6d. net.

The Immanence of Christ in Modern Life. By FREDERICK R. SWAN. With Introduction by J. BRIERLEY, B.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Health in the Home Life. By HONNOR MORTEN, Author of "A Complete Book of Nursing," "How to Treat Accidents and Illnesses," &c. Crown 8vo, art leather cloth, 2s. 6d. net.

2/6 net (*continued*)

The Challenge, and Other Stories for Boys and Girls. By Rev. J. G. STEVENSON, Author of "The Christ of the Children." 4to, cloth boards, 240 pp. Eight Illustrations. 2s. 6d. net.

Liberty and Religion. By P. WHITWELL WILSON, Author of "Why We Believe," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

The New Evangel: Studies in the "New Theology." By Rev. J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., D.Phil. Second Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

"May be studied with advantage."—*Spectator.*

The Resultant Greek Testament. Exhibiting the Text in which the majority of Modern Editors are agreed. By the late RICHARD FRANCIS WEYMOUTH, D.Litt. Cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

A Young Man's Religion and his Father's Faith. By N. MCGHEE WATERS. Small crown 8vo, cloth boards, gilt top, 2s. 6d. net.

"It is an earnestly religious and well-written work."—*The Scotsman.*

The Good New Times. By H. JEFFS, Author of "Practical Lay Preaching and Speaking to Men." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

History of France, 1180-1314 A.D. The Growth of the Feudal Absolute Monarchy. With four maps, illustrating the changes in ownership of territory in France at different periods. By A. F. DODD (First Class in History Tripos, Cantab.). 2s. 6d. net.

Simple Cookery. Comprising "Tasty Dishes" and "More Tasty Dishes." Over 500 Tested Receipts. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

"A book that should be in every household."

The Children's Paul. A Life of St. Paul specially written for the Young. By Rev. J. G. STEVENSON. 4to, cloth boards, 8 Illustrations on art paper, 2s. 6d. net.

The Christ of the Children. A Life of Jesus for Little People. By Rev. J. G. STEVENSON. Cheap Edition. 4to, cloth boards, 12 Illustrations, 2s. 6d. net.

"It is the very loveliest life of Jesus for children ever written by a long way."—Rev. KINGSCOTE GREENLAND in *The Methodist Recorder.*

2/6 net *(continued)*

Stories of Old. Bible Stories Retold. By C. D. MICHAEL, Author of "Noble Deeds," "Deeds of Daring," &c. Cheap Edition. 4to, 288 pp., cloth boards, 8 illustrations, 2s. net.

The Christian World Album of Sacred and Standard Compositions for the Pianoforte. Edited by W. H. JUDE. (Uniform with "The Christian World Album of Sacred Songs."). Paper cover, 2s. 6d. net. Cloth boards, 4s. net.

The Christian World Album of Sacred Songs. Containing 94 Sacred Songs, in old notation and tonic sol-fa, selected from the choicest works of the most eminent composers. Edited by W. H. JUDE. 160 pages, paper cover, 2s. 6d. net; cloth boards, 4s. net.

A Popular History of the Free Churches. By C. SILVESTER HORNE, M.A. Cheap Edition, with additional Chapter. Cloth boards. 2s. 6d. net.

POPULAR EDITION OF EMMA JANE WORBOISE'S NOVELS

Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. 6d. net.

Abbey Mill, The.
Brudenells of Brude, The.
Canonbury Holt.
Chrystabel.
Emilia's Inheritance.
Esther Wynne.
Father Fabian.
Fortune's Favourite.
Fortunes of Cyril Denham, The.
Grey and Gold.
Grey House at Endlestone, The.
Heirs of Errington, The.
His Next of Kin.
House of Bondage.
Husbands and Wives.
Joan Carlsbroke.
Lady Clarissa.
Margaret Torrington.
Millicent Kendrick.
Mr. Montmorency's Money
Nobly Born.
Oliver Westwood.
Overdale.
Robert Wreford's Daughter.
St. Beetha's.
Singlehurst Manor.
Sissie.
Story of Penelope, The.
Thornycroft Hall.
Violet Vaughan.
Warleigh's Trust.
A Woman's Patience.

2/- net

Christ and War. The Reasonableness of Disarmament on Christian, Humanitarian and Economic Grounds. A Peace Study Text Book. By WILLIAM E. WILSON, B.D. Preface by Dr. RENDEL HARRIS. Crown 8vo. Cloth boards. 2s. net. Cloth limp, 1s. 6d. net.

2/- net

The Church and the Next Generation. By RICHARD ROBERTS, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

The Story of Joseph the Dreamer, told by Himself, and Other Poems. By ALFRED CAPES TARBOLTON. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

The Judges of Jesus: Judas, Annas, Peter, Caiaphas, Herod, Pilate's Wife, Pontius Pilate. By Rev. J. G. STEVENSON, Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

The Value of the Old Testament. By BERNARD J. SNELL, M.A., Author of "The Value of the Apocrypha," "Gain or Loss?" &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

The Purpose of the Cross. By B. G. COLLINS. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

Atonement and Progress. By NEWTON H. MARSHALL, M.A., Ph.D., Author of "Theology and Truth." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

Authority and the Light Within. By EDWARD GRUBB, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 2s. net.

Ideals for Girls. By the Rev. H. R. HAWEIS, M.A., Author of "Music and Morals." New Edition, crown 8vo, handsomely bound in bevelled boards, gilt edges, 2s. net.

"A book that all parents should place in the hands of their daughters."

PICTURE BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG

Pictures by LOUIS WAIN, HARRY B. NEILSON, J. A. SHEPHERD, ELSIE BLOMFIELD, etc.

Printed in colour, varnished boards, 2s. net.

Animal Fancy-Land.

Animal Picture-Land.

Animal Happyland.

Animals in Fun-Land.

Holidays in Animal Land.

1/9 net

Through Many Windows. Some Modern Parables. By ERNEST A. BIRCH. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 9d. net.

Life's Little Lessons. Addresses to Children. By VERNON GIBBERD. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 9d. net.

Old Testament Stories in Modern Light. A BIBLE GUIDE FOR THE YOUNG. By T. RHONDDA WILLIAMS, Author of "The Christ Within," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 9d. net.

The Merry Monopedes, and other Stories for Children. By VIVIAN T. POMEROY. Crown 8vo., cloth boards, 1s. 9d.

The Invisible Companion and Other Stories for Children. By EDWARD W. LEWIS, M.A., B.D., Author of "The Unescapeable Christ," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 9d. net.

Sharing His Sufferings. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D., Author of "The Passion for Souls," &c. Small crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 9d. net; leather 2s. 6d. net.

1/6 net

THE "FREEDOM OF FAITH" SERIES

F'cap 8vo, 128 pp., handsomely bound in cloth, with chaste design in gold. Price 1s. 6d. net.

The Simple Things of the Christian Life. By G. CAMPBELL MORGAN, D.D.

The Letters of Christ. By CHARLES BROWN.

Christ's Pathway to the Cross. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D.

The Crucible of Experience. By F. A. RUSSELL.

The Passion for Souls. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A.

The Value of the Apocrypha. By BERNARD J. SNELL, M.A.

Inspiration in Common Life. By W. L. WATKINSON, M.A.

Prayer. By WILLIAM WATSON, M.A.

A Reasonable View of Life. By J. M. BLAKE, M.A.

"There are precious things in every volume, and the Series deserves success."—*Dundee Advertiser.*

***The Graves of the Fallen.** By JAMES BURNS, M.A., Author of "The Happy Warrior," "Sir Galahad," etc. Bound in fancy grey cloth, silver lettering. 1s. 6d. net.

The Man on The Road. By CHARLES H. BETTS, LL.D., A.S.P., Author of "Fragments of Thought," "Living Pleasures," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

1/6 net (*continued*)

The Well by Bethlehem's Gate. By WILLIAM ALLEN KNIGHT, Author of "The Song of our Syrian Guest," etc. Handsomely bound in cloth boards, gilt, 1s. 6d. net.

The Way and the Work. A Manual for Sunday School Teachers. By J. W. WIMMS, M.A., B.Sc. (Lecturer on the Theory and Practice of Education, University of London), and the REV. FREDERICK HUMPHREY. Crown 8vo, cloth boards. 1s. 6d. net.

For Childhood and Youth. Ideals of the Modern Sunday School. By THISELTON MARK, D.Lit., B.Sc., Author of "The Teacher and the Child," etc. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Facets of Faith. Aspects of Spiritual Life and Thought. By A. W. BLUE. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

The Wayfarer at the Cross Roads. By ARTHUR PRINGLE. Author of "The Faith of a Wayfarer." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

J. H. Jowett, M.A., D.D. A CHARACTER STUDY. By FRANK MORISON. Illustrations on art paper. Fancy paper boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Chats with Women on Everyday Subjects. By EDITH C. KENYON, Author of "A Queen of Nine Days," &c. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Faith and Form. An Attempt at a Plain Re-statement of Christian Belief in the Light of To-day. By HENRY VARLEY, B.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

The Reasonableness of Jesus. By FRANK Y. LEGGATT, M.A. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

The Making of Heaven and Hell. By J. M. BLAKE, M.A., Author of "A Reasonable View of Life," &c. Small 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Notes on the Life and Teaching of Jesus. By EDWARD GRUBB, M.A., Author of "Authority and the Light Within." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net; limp cloth, 1s. net.

The Faith of a Wayfarer. By ARTHUR PRINGLE. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Jesus or Christ? By Rev. J. WARSCHAUER, M.A., D.Phil., Author of "The New Evangel," "Jesus: Seven Questions." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Who Wrote the Bible? By WASHINGTON GLADDEN, D.D., Author of "The Growing Revelation," &c. New and cheap edition, 256 pages, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

1/6 net (*continued*)

Women and their Work. By MARIANNE FARNINGHAM, Author of "Harvest Gleanings," "Women and their Saviour" Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Sunny Memories of Australasia. By Rev. W. CUFF. Crown 8vo, cloth boards. Portraits and Illustrations. 1s. 6d. net.

Burning Questions. By WASHINGTON GLADDEN. Cheap Edition. Crown 8vo, cloth, 1s. 6d. net.

Reform in Sunday School Teaching. By Professor A. S. PEAKE. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Words by the Wayside. By GEORGE MATHESON, D.D., LL.D., F.R.S.E., Author of "Thoughts for Life's Journey," &c. New Edition. Oblong, cloth boards, gilt top, 1s. 6d. net.

The Happy Warrior. An interpretation of the famous picture by G. F. WATTS. By JAMES BURNS, M.A. Author of "Illustrations from Art," etc. Bound in padded white porcelain, with silver lettering and photogravure frontispiece in box, 1s. 6d. net.

This beautiful booklet offers a message of tender consolation to the bereaved, and is dedicated to the memory of the gallant sons, who, by land or sea, have laid down their lives for the Empire.

The Great Hereafter. Questions raised by the Great War Concerning the Destiny of our Dead. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D., author of "The Gospel of Grace," "Our Life Beyond," etc. F'cap 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Sir Galahad. By JAMES BURNS, M.A., Author of "The Happy Warrior." With Photogravure Frontispiece of Watts's famous picture "Sir Galahad." Bound in khaki cloth, 1s. 6d. net.

Around the Guns. Sundays in Camp. By JAMES BLACK, M.A., of Edinburgh. Crown 8vo, khaki cloth boards, with design in colours, second edition, 1s. 6d. net.

Christ and War. The Reasonableness of Disarmament on Christian, Humanitarian and Economic Grounds. A Peace Study Text Book. By WILLIAM E. WILSON, B.D. Preface by Dr. RENDEL HARRIS. Crown 8vo, cloth limp. 1s. 6d. net. Cloth Boards. 2s. net.

How to Cook: The Art of Cooking made easy, with a chapter on the use of a gas oven. By J. S. MARSHALL. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Our Life Beyond. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D., Author of "Christ's Pathway to the Cross," "The Gospel of Grace," etc., etc. cloth boards, gilt lettering, 1s. 6d. net; white cloth, padded, in box, 1/9 net.

Oliver Cromwell. By R. F. HORTON, D.D., Author of "John Howe, "The Teaching of Jesus," &c., &c. Sixth Edition. Nineteenth Thousand. 1s. 6d. net.

"Worthy a place in the library of every Christian student."
Methodist Recorder.

1/6 net (*continued*)

Short Talks to Boys and Girls. By J. C. CARLILE, Author of "Talks to Little Folks." Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 6d. net.

Tasty Dishes. A Choice Selection of Tested Recipes, showing what we can have for Breakfast, Dinner, Tea and Supper. It is designed for people of moderate means who desire to have pleasant and varied entertainment for themselves and their friends. It is a book of genuine and tested information. New Edition. Thoroughly revised and brought up to date. 130th Thousand. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d. net.

"No home ought to be without this timely, useful, and practical family friend."—*Brighton Gazette.*

More Tasty Dishes. A Book of Tasty, Economical and Tested Recipes. Including a Section on Invalid Cookery. A Supplement to "Tasty Dishes." New Edition. Price 1s. 6d. net.

"Every recipe is so clearly stated that the most inexperienced cook could follow them and make dainty dishes at a small cost."—*Pearson's Weekly.*

"The recipes given have been carefully tried and not been found wanting."—*The Star.*

Talks to Little Folks. A Series of Short Addresses. By Rev. J. C. CARLILE. Crown 8vo, art vellum, 1s. 6d. net.

"No one who reads this book can reasonably doubt that Mr. Carlile is master of the difficult art of catching and sustaining the interest of young people. He is wise enough to dispense with the preacher's framework, texts, introductions, &c., and at once he arrests attention by a direct question or a brief story."—*Literary World.*

1/3 net

The Price of Priestcraft. By HOWARD EVANS. Crown 8vo, paper covers, 1s. 3d. net; cloth, 1s. 9d. net.

"We wish for it a very large circulation. No one has served the cause of religious freedom better than Mr. Howard Evans by his labours in the Press and elsewhere."—*British Weekly.*

RECITATION BOOKS

By MARY E. MANNERS.

Crown 8vo, Linen Covers, 1s. 3d. each.

A Tale of a Telephone, and Other Pieces.

"Narrative pieces, suitable for recitation."—*Outlook.*

Aunt Agatha Ann: and other Ballads. Illustrations by ERNOLD A. MASON and LOUIS WAIN.

"Excellent pieces for recitation from a popular pen."—*Lady's Pictorial.*

1/3 net

The Joy Bringer: A Message for those who Mourn. By EMILY RIDOWAY, author of "The Sweet o' the Year," "The Gate Beautiful," etc. Tastefully bound in white porcelain and blue cloth, 1s. 3d. net.

A Week with the Fleet: Being Impressions of the Fleet at Work. By CECIL ROBERTS. F'cap. 8vo, illustrated cover, 1s. 3d. net.

Faith—To-day. By WALTER F. ADENEY, M.A., D.D., author of "How to Read the Bible," etc. F'cap 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

Kaiser or Christ? Sermons by the BISHOP OF LONDON, DR. JOHN CLIFFORD, DR. S. PARKES CADMAN, DR. GRIFFITH-JONES, DR. C. H. WATKINS, REV. THEODORE WOOD. Demy 8vo, paper covers, 1s. 3d. net.

Quaint Rhymes for the Battlefield. By a QUONDAM CRICKETER (C. D. STUDD, Belgian Congo, 1913). Cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

Sweet Peas and Antirrhinums. How to Grow Them to Perfection. By WILLIAM CUTHBERTSON, Author of "Pansies, Violas and Violets." Crown 8vo, coloured paper boards and frontispiece in colour, 1s. 3d. net. Written in a popular form for the amateur gardener by one who is a thorough master of his subject.

The Way of Remembrance. By J. A. HUTTON, M.A. Tastefully bound in blue and white with gilt lettering. 1s. 3d. net.

The Great Embassy. Studies in the Growth of Christianity. By CUTHBERT MCEVOY, M.A. Foolscap 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

Everychild. By HAROLD BEGBIE, Author of "Broken Earthenware." Crown 8vo, Frontispiece and cover in colours. 1s. 3d. net.

The Seed of the Kingdom. Devotional readings from the letters of Isaac Penington. Selected by JENNIE STREET (*Editor of the Sunday School Times*). Fancy Boards, 1s. 3d. net.

Flowers from the Master's Garden. By A. E. WINTER. Cloth boards, gilt lettering, 1s. 3d. net.

The Garrisoned Soul. Meditations on "Peace, Perfect Peace," by C. E. P. ANTRAM. Fancy cloth, 1s. 3d. net.

"It is just the sort of book, chaste and beautiful, contents and binding alike, that would make a pretty present on a birthday or a Church festival. Its size and its type make it suitable also to send to an invalid. Indeed, its cheering chapters would to many such, we are sure, act like a tonic, and be an efficient co-worker with the physician."—*Sheffield Telegraph.*

1/3 net (*continued*)

On the Rendering into English of the Greek Aorist and Perfect. With Appendices on the New Testament use of ΓΑΡ and of ΟΥΝ. Price 1s. 3d. net.

Women and their Saviour. Thoughts of a Minute for a Month. By MARIANNE FARNINGHAM, Author of "Harvest Gleaninge," &c. Cloth, 1s. 3d. net.

"These 'thoughts of a minute for a month of mornings,' are the outpourings of an entirely unaffected piety."—*Glasgow Herald.*

Sunday Afternoon Song Book, with Tunes. Compiled by H. A. KENNEDY and R. D. METCALFE. 1s. 3d. net. Words only, 12s. 6d. per hundred net.

"The airs have been selected and arranged under the editorship of Mr. R. D. Metcalfe, and add so much to the value of the collection that this edition will easily supersede all others and give the work a new popularity with choral societies and others interested in church music."

The Scotsman.

Outline Text Lessons for Junior Classes. By GLADYS DAVIDSON, Author of "Kindergarten Bible Stories," &c. F'cap 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

"The book is simple and practical, and will be found suggestive and helpful by teachers."—*Sunday School Chronicle.*

How to Read the Bible. Hints for Sunday School Teachers and other Bible Students. By W. F. ADENEY, M.A. New and Revised Edition. Cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

"A most admirable little work. We know of no book which deals with this subject so clearly and adequately within so small a compass. It speaks of itself modestly as 'Hints for Sunday-school Teachers and other Bible Students,' but it is one of the very few manuals which are well worth the study of the clergy."—*The Guardian.*

A Religion that will Wear. A Layman's Confession of Faith. Addressed to Agnostics, by a SCOTTISH PRESBYTERIAN. Crown 8vo, cloth boards, 1s. 3d. net.

The Divine Satisfaction. A Review of what should and what should not be thought about the Atonement. By J. M. WHITON. Crown 8vo, paper, 1s. 3d. net.

Health and Home Nursing. By Mrs. LESSELS MATHER, Health Lecturer to the Northumberland County Council. F'cap. 8vo, cloth, 1s. 3d. net.

A book that should be in every household. Contains chapters on The Care of the Invalid, Homely Local Applications, Feeding the Invalid, Infection and Disinfection, Care of the Teeth, The Value of Foods, Influenza, its Causes and Prevention, Consumption, its Causes and Prevention, Digestion and Indigestion, Headaches, Home Nursing of Sick Children, What to do till the Doctor Comes, Habit in Relation to Health, The Health of the Town Dweller.

1/3 net (*continued*)

Wayside Angels, and Other Sermons. By W. K. BURFORD. Pott 8vo, cloth, 1s. 3d. net.

Morning, Noon and Night. By R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D. F'cap 8vo, parchment cover with gold lettering, 1s. 3d. net.

"Deeply suggestive, and as earnest as its fancies are pleasing and quaint." *Dundee Advertiser.*

Christianity in Common Speech: Suggestions for an Every-day Belief. By Sir J. COMPTON-RICKETT, M.P. Demy 8vo, 1s. 3d. net.

6d. net

Order of Memorial Service for those Fallen in the War. Containing full order of service, with prayers, address, suggested hymns, etc. 6d. net.

They that Wait. A Message for War Time. By J. H. JOWETT, M.A., D.D. In this daintily produced brochure, Dr. J. H. Jowett presents an inspiriting message of comfort and hope for these times of anxiety and strain. 6d. net.

C. Silvester Horne. In Memoriam. April 15th, 1865—May 2nd, 1914. 64 pages, with portrait, 6d. net.

The Birthday of Hope. By J. D. JONES, M.A., D.D. Illustrated. Printed on art paper, with fancy cover and ribbon, 6d. net. Padded white cloth, lettering in gold, boxed, 1s. 6d. net.

The Ship's Engines. A Parable. By the late T. CAMPBELL FINLAYSON, D.D. In vellum cover, 6d. net.

Rev. J. H. JOWETT says:—"I am so glad you are issuing the article in the shape of the little booklet. I am sure it will be very helpful to many people, and will bring light and leading to many bewildered souls."

England's Danger. By R. F. HORTON, M.A., D.D. Price 6d. net. Contents: ROMANISM AND NATIONAL DECAY; ST. PETER AND THE ROCK; TRUTH; PROTESTANTISM; HOLY SCRIPTURE; PURGATORY.

"Good fighting discourses. They contend that Roman Catholicism has ruined every country in which it prevails and controvert the leading positions taken by Roman theologians."—*Scotsman.*

6d.

CLARKE'S SIXPENNY SERIES

Demy 8vo, Paper Covers.

Studies of the Soul. By J. BRIERLEY, B.A.
Ourselves and the Universe. By J. BRIERLEY.

4d. net

Holy Christian Empire. By Rev. PRINCIPAL FORSYTH, M.A., D.D., of Hackney College, Hampstead. Crown 8vo, paper cover, 4d. net.

"Rich in noble thought, in high purpose, in faith and in courage. Every sentence tells, and the whole argument moves onward to its great conclusion. Dr. Forsyth has put the argument for missions in a way that will nerve and inspire the Church's workers at home and abroad for fresh sacrifice"
London Quarterly Review.

3d. net

School Hymns, for Schools and Missions. Words only. Compiled by E. H. MAYO GUNN. Cloth limp, 3d.; cloth boards, 6d.; music, 3s.

2d. net

The Sunday Afternoon Song Book. Containing 137 Hymns. For use at "Pleasant Sunday Afternoons," and Other Gatherings. Compiled by H. A. KENNEDY, of the Men's Sunday Union, Stepney Meeting House. Twentieth Thousand, 2d; music, 1s.

"Contains 137 hymns, the catholic character of which, in the best sense of the term, may be gathered from the names of the authors, which include Tennyson, Ebenezer Elliott, Whittier, G. Herbert, C. Wesley, Thomas Hughes, J. H. Newman, Longfellow, Bonar, and others. While the purely dogmatic element is largely absent, the Christian life, in its forms of aspiration, struggle against sin and love for the true and the good, is well illustrated."—*Literary World.*

INDEX OF TITLES

INDEX OF AUTHORS

Headley Brothers, Printers, Ashford, Kent; and Bishopsgate, E.C.